The New Coterie

A QUARTERLY
OF LITERATURE
& ART

NUMBER SIX
SUMMER & AUTUMN
1927

LONDON
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All communications should be addressed to:

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Contributions submitted should be accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope

L. Aaronson

REVELATION

TURNING to sleep, to new strange drowned blue gleams,
I bless the space of solitude clean for dreams.
I bless the straining curtains where they hold
The deep recessive night, and the old
Rough turning tree, and window-squares, and cones
Of hidden lamps . . . The lamp-shade slightly swings
With flies perched sure and blind. Its shadow-rings
Travel about the ceiling like a thought
Whose calm centricity can with madness sport.
My limbs are simple-tired and my mind
Matches their Adam weariness and is kind
To chance's every trivial touch and taste.
Time is a plenitude easy to waste.
In this fine rarity and spiritual bliss
I cast aside with ease what comes amiss.
A mathematic saintliness of truth
Seizes each tiny tasking for its growth.
My tired limbs emerge like Titan-limbs
From the soul's choked Sargasso and are hymns
To tidal certainties of the world's rims . . .

I conquer all variety by my joy
But lose no subtlest savour poised to annoy,
Yet hairsbreadth this side Heaven. I find Death,
My daily fiend and neighbour, with spicy breath
Fresh-come from Paradise . . . Could I praise
With the true accent, as a Christ can raise
A Lazarus from the dead, I'd have witness nigh,—
My wife I scan now with the inward eye:
My friend whose shoulder I can lean upon
When pride and petty tyranny are gone.
I'd show them furious miracles, how the soul
Can spin from skin and flesh an aureole
To burn upon the forehead of a dream.
Their dust would dance like motes within a beam.
Caught in the breath of my imagination
Their limbs would shine in death's illumination.
They'd clap their hands before me and the night's
Green exhalation mingled with the lights
Would be the savorous dew and dawn of Eden.
They'd shed the lust for furthest immortality.
They'd find God's cipher in the spirit hidden
To read in ease God's own calligraphy
And find th' immortal spelling in the mood
That worked a measure out of solitude.
Seeing me lonely they'd cry about my head:
"Look Lazarus! arisen from the dead!
Look Lazarus remote with fire of death."
And she my wife, before the spiritual breath
Would love the loneliness of love's salvation
And he, my friend, would prove imagination.

July, 1926

L. Aaronson

THE WANDERING JEW

YES! It is I you're seeking, I
Who spat at Him and plucked His beard.
He might have struck me, but His pride refrained
And for His pride I'd strike Him once again,
That quarter-master-sergeant rationing Heaven!
Meekness, you say? Is it so to turn a cheek
Or render unto Cæsar merely Cæsar's—
Cæsar whose right to earth seemed right to Heaven?
What! are we not all Christ? I've suffered since,
Slouching from Pole to Pole, from Age to Age.
Ten million times I've borne the sins of the world.
Christ's burdens were a beggar's purse to these.
And then, the bliss, the soul's emolument—
To die young above the rack of the crowd
With God's tuned approbation in One's ears:
In melodrama staged by seraphim
To heighten inner fervours: and the smells
Of Paradise driving through rifts of sky.
Gabriel! Gabriel! Death's not hard that way.
Judas hanged himself upon the upas-tree.
I watched, and through his navel his soul went
Pop like a cork
And dived to Hell.
Men said: "Thus die the cowards and betrayers."
But Hell's an immortality outside life,
A consciousness of pain, it's half a dream.
It has an even texture and design.
It's no poor thistledown on the slanted wind,
No puppet wandering Jew, peddler in sins,
Blurred memories, anxieties, and reasons.
It's no immortal soul most mortally awake
To all the hocus-pocus of this world—
It's creeds, conditions, customs, loyalties,

Foibles, fashions, favours, laws and lies:
All cheating-symbols for infinitude,
For properties to endure
Outside the weighted eyelids, and the stubble
On dead men's chins, and the first worm at the groin.
Here, Gabriel, we have antidotes for solitude,
For true uprightness, and for pillars of flame,
For that dread quietude which achieves itself
Out of the ticking of Time's very heart,
That Death which Christ achieved so easily.
Our feet squelch in the dung: "That's Life!" they cry.
Our nose drops too. "Worship of earth," they say.
And as the soul, four-footed, snouts for seeds
They make their genuflexions and they sing
Of new Atlantis and the City of God
And how Christ's innocence shines in children's eyes,
And how we live to build for what we were,
And each is but a stone in the high altar
That God shall sanctify when all is done.
They make the body counsellor or king
And starch its robes so stiffly it seems to stand
Like the true gyroscopic soul . . . but spin is lost.
I've seen it all and lived in villeinage
To this poor bestial immortality,
Yet known I cannot have the death I need,
Death whose strange ways
Have other tricks of crowning vaporous kings,
Christ's tricks, God's tricks of lamplight in a street,
Devouring its own darkness, starkly alone,
And nimbused with the outer curves of light,
It's incandescent essences sleep-free.
Gabriel! Time has stripped me of desire,
Yet still I cling to my desire for death
Christ could not rob me of, since Death's my edge
That sends you pumping life into this heart.
(I hid but none can hide from God's police.)
You rob me of my ultimate Christliness
Yet leave me with Christ's galaxy of sins . . .
Say this to Christ: "Since I am singled out,
Single I am and need to die for Him!"

November, 1926

H. E. Bates

SONG IN WINTER

YOUR hands have trembled under mine,
Your breast has surged : a summer sea,
And those impatient smears of wine,
Your lips, have set their mark on me.

And singing is so chaste a thing
And chastity so green a song,
I have no need to ache for spring
Nor go ungarlanded for long.

And have no turbulence but this :
What devil else distracted me
Before your hands, and breast, and kiss
Reiterated constancy?

THE PATH

JAMES KERR threw back his head, his nostrils dilated and he smiled. It was childish to have planned this surprise visit. He might have written before he left Africa.

Ah, how good the country smells. Moors—what did they smell of? The oil in sheep's wool—yes, that was it, and earth, and faintly of bog-myrtle, and gorse. Yes, he might have given her the pleasure of anticipation instead of writing that he was going on a journey which would take him some weeks. Too late now, and anyway she also was impulsive, she would enter heartily into the spirit of the surprise. Seven years since he had tramped across this moor. Little more than that since . . . but Peggy had a husband now, a house, several babies, and probably she had grown fat. Gorse—sweet, sickly, nasty. Was he bitter about Peggy? No. Gorse and dew-moist moor grass were good to breathe. Besides he had cut Peggy right out and other women had filled her place, adequately too. Tangle—gorse—tangle—the smell of decomposing tangle half a mile away, mellowed as it blew over the moor.

She would be sitting reading in the lamplight, that bonnie, soft woman, now a widow. Poor Mother, and yet the death of his father must have been a happy release. He didn't regret it. Perhaps she was lonely though. Would she marry again? Peggy married . . . Did it hurt her slim little body when she had her babies? Brutes men were. This husband of hers had sons and daughters . . .How hot the air was and how still!

Would he go straight up over the hill and round by Brown's farm or cut across the half mile of moor to the cliff path? Two sides of a triangle. No hurry, and he was enjoying himself. He would prove to himself that he was not still soft and sentimental about Peggy. They had christened that path. She had suggested " Beautiful Path," but that lacked the desired intimacy so he called it " Our Path." Sons and daughters. Did he crave for sons and daughters? A daughter, perhaps, a little girl called . . . no indeed, certainly not " Peggy." " Our Path!"

how sloppy and unimaginative! Cleaner and fresher air nearer the sea. With longer strides he hastened forward. Anyway she was fat now—gross—he was sure she was, and a half-baked Martha. Besides, her husband had violated her body. She was not too prudish for that, and yet that last night, more than seven years ago—she was twenty-four then, she knew quite well what was bound to happen. She knew what she was leading towards. How bitter the rotting tangle smelt, and harsh the noises of the sea—little sharp waves, not clear enough to satisfy but just irritating, and the wind rising. It was as if the wind wanted to howl and the sea to rise in great booming volumes and throw itself recklessly against the cliffs, but was held in check like a dog at the leash when its bark becomes a choked gasp. Twenty steps now and he would be at the edge of the cliffs, on " Our Path " . . . His throat was throbbing, he stretched his neck, put his forefinger down his collar and tugged.

Boom-tch! *that* was a wave, the seventh, very satisfying. Why weren't they all like that—definite? Another! Of course! it was Crabs Gully, they were always booming in there. He had rowed his mother round there the day her hat blew off and over the cliff. A ridiculous hat, but she always wore wide brimmed hats, and that one had hung on a ledge of rock out of reach and shivered and giggled as they gazed impotently up at it. She had done many things to please his father—he liked large hats—and what had it availed her? Brutes men were . . . As she stretched her neck back looking up at that silly hat her hair fell down—long, silky, fair, soft and beautiful, beautiful hair . . . beautiful . . . " Beautiful Path." Damn Peggy. He would like to put his fingers round the back of her neck, his thumbs on her throat and press, slowly . . . Poor little beast—fat now, giving orders to the butcher for ugly, red, raw meat. Violation! beastly little hypocrite—and she had coarse hair, not soft and silky like the woman who was his mother and was sitting reading, waiting for him and not knowing it.

What would he do if he met the little beast? But he wouldn't meet her. She was married now, and only lovers used this out-of-the-way path at night and they had the hill and the whole moor. There would be one night in the old house overlooking the cliff, the next day he would carry his mother off to London, buy things for her and give her a giddying change of life for a few weeks, then back to Africa and work. He had already booked

their rooms in a hotel and dumped his baggage there. No, he wouldn't see Peggy—didn't want to.

He must watch his step carefully now. The evening was darkening in visible spasms—one ought to hear it closing as one hears the day lightening in spasms in Grieg's " Morning." Here the path used to be rather broken down where the hill he might have crossed sloped down to it, and below him was a gap in the cliffs which were replaced by a lightly vegetated slope running out into the sea. A few yards below was a little grassy plateau, hidden by trees from passers-by on the path, where he and Peggy—where Peggy had pressed her head up under his arm with little jerks, her cloak thrown across his knees . . . Little hypocrite. He was glad he had no sentiment about her or her " Beautiful Path." Ugh! that in itself was heartless in its detachment. " Our Path " had been his name. Fat and careless she had become, like Amy—that woman he had lived with in Cape Town last Christmas. He hated fat women as he hated bitches in pup. He had called Amy " beastly hypocrite " and been rough, but she had not whimpered about violation. He had felt then that Peggy was fat and stupid, and Amy had to grin and bear it. Brutes men were, and he laughed.

The wind had freshened; it could not settle down to sleep with the rest of nature. That had been just such a night. Poor, tender, innocent little Peggy! She didn't know what she was doing . . . those damned little dunts under his arm . . . His fingers creeping about in her hair and her ears. Coarse hair it was. And she was fat now. The tang of rotting tangle. A seagull screaming " violation!" She was twenty-four then—on the grassy plateau, hidden by trees from passers-by on the path. There below him he knew were the trees that hid it—the little grassy plateau . . .

That kind, pretty, impulsive woman sitting in the lamplight, waiting for him and not knowing it—what did life hold for her now? Would she marry again? *She* had not let herself grow fat and careless. He had hated his father, and now already hated any other man who would want . . . " violation!" screamed a seagull . . . He would go down and spoil the place. He would hack the hard turf with his heels and break down the trees. He would butcher it . . . Fat little beast, buying ugly, red, raw beef. Her head under his arm, her hands about his knees. His knees shook, he trembled.

God! Footsteps! Here, at this time! alone too—a man presumably. What was that fluttering in the wind? A cloak . . . A cloak over his knees, knees that now trembled. They stood facing each other. His eyes strained hard to penetrate the darkness enshrouding a woman's figure, a long cape flying in the wind, a little round head. A sudden movement towards the woman and her fear broke its armour. She shivers. She holds her throat, she knows he'll put his thumbs on her throat and press, slowly . . . A gust of wind blows her cloak out from her shoulders and swirls it round him. She overbalances. Was it her breath or his that came in hard gasps, his or her body that trembled and throbbed? . . . Carry her gently down . . . hidden by the trees. None of the old little tricks, no head under his arm, no straying fingers here, but two firm hands grasping his head, a burning, passionate mouth devouring his lips, his face, his ears—his lips . . . Soft hair that brushed his cheek, not coarse . . . why had he thought her hair was coarse?

* * * * *

Raining. Well she must be out of sight by now. He had let her go, no word having passed between them, with her supposed secret. When he was sailing back to Africa his mother would tell Peggy that he had been at the old house on the cliffs for that one night. She would then know who shared her secret . . . whom *she* had violated—who it was that knew she was a starved wife. He laughed as he jerked to his feet and flapped his coat to shake off the light rain.

As he approached the house from the side he noticed a light in the kitchen window. Old Jessica would be in bed an hour ago, only his mother would be up and she ought to be sitting under the lamp, reading. That is his picture. She must be sitting there when he has his first glimpse of her between the curtains. That night, more than seven years ago, she had been sitting thus waiting for him to come in and he had watched till she wearied and went to bed. He could not have faced her that night in his anger and humiliation. To-night he would face her jubilant. He must not let her hear his step. He must skirt round by the kitchen, keep close to the house, quietly, on the grass, until ready to spring his surprise. He must not startle her in this lonely house. Would that kitchen light never go out! At last! Just one glance through the rain-blurred window into old Jessica's kitchen, all dark but for a flickering of fire light. There in front

of the fire a clothes screen with a coat or something spread out to dry. Now for his picture. No, it was too late. She would put out that light next and go upstairs. He musn't wait. He knocked gently.

* * * * *

England, Goodbye! The last faint outline disappeared. He would perhaps never return. Mother—she had been perfectly wonderful. She had been almost hysterical from the first moment of their meeting, and all the time had maintained a feverish, glowing, youthful joyousness. Had his father's death been such a relief to her? They had scarcely spoken of him. But she was a different woman. He loved her—loved buying things for her, loved the beautiful things she chose. But there was something lacking. Did she forget to kiss her son, after seven years' absence too, was she shy of him? She had shown him tenderness all through but he felt a queer sense of being a stranger with his own mother. She had promised to go out to him. Would she? he wondered. Those high crowned hats with the narrow brim made her so young. When she had bought the green one she remarked excitedly, "Jimmy, I feel as if I were buying a trousseau." Then she had fainted. Perhaps they had done too much in those few weeks in London, but she had seemed anxious to keep going and quite capable of it . . . He was haunted now by that strange gleam that came into her eyes at times. It was there when they said good-bye, so peculiar . . . and she had not kissed him even then. What was that gleam in her eyes, what did it mean? Hunger, probing, reproach, devotion? It seemed all and yet none of these.

He left the rail at last and sat on a chair. His eyes were shut, and he hoped to be left in peace . . . Little Peggy . . . thin, white and cold now . . . She had died that day he went home . . . Dead while he was venting his bitter thoughts of her . . . what a requiem! . . . God! who was it shared his secret with him? . . . Thin and white and cold . . . He moved in his chair, crossed his arms. His eyes were shut.

Donald Boyd

EARLY MORNING

IT still seems funny to me, my wife leaving the house like that. I can't understand it at all, not even now when it's some years ago. I wonder what you'd think of it, I mean, supposing you were a friend of mine and knew all about it. But then I dare say it's all according as women are. And then, I'm not the same as most men. I've got quite a peculiarity. I must be quite unique, a friend said to me when I told him. The truth is I don't sleep, and yet, as my friend said, I look well on it. I have quite a lot of colour and my hair is fair, not grey. Of course I am a bit bald in front, but not much, I have seven of my own teeth still, three up and four down, and though my face is thin, I flatter myself it's better so than some. I hope you will pardon my going into this personal description. I don't want to appear vain, for I am far from that. My wife used to say I had no proper pride. But I only wanted to show that in spite of not sleeping I am quite a healthy-looking man.

When I say I don't sleep, I don't mean, of course, that I'm wide awake all night. In a way of speaking I do sleep. But if you were in the room where I was in bed in the middle of the night, and said anything to me, I should be able to reply without being the least bit confused or awkward by being asked like that. I should just answer straight away. That isn't at all usual, I think.

Well, I could do that any time. I hear everything that goes on. I hear all the late people. I go to bed at 10.15 p.m. and I always keep my window open, at least, always now that I sleep in the top room. When I slept with my wife she found it too draughty. That was when we first came to town. Of course that's some time ago, and she was much younger than me. It was the draughts in this house. She did try it for some time, at my request, but she found the window gave her neuralgia, even though she always slept with her head under the clothes. But I suppose women are sensitive like that. Often I get up in the

night and walk about the house for a bit of a change. Sometimes I make myself a cup of tea, and now and again I used to smoke a cigarette with it in the kitchen, but not often, because my wife found that the smoke hung in the air and made the room smelly for breakfast. At one time, too, I used to look into her room in the darkness, but be very careful not to wake her, because once I did wake her bending over her, and it gave her such a shock I promised I would not do that again. As a matter of fact later on I couldn't because a young man who was a friend of ours gave her a little dog that she called Percy after him, I thought it was rather rude, but he didn't seem to mind, and she trained it to sleep on her mat. Women have these ideas, of course. I remember my mother being very fond of an old dog we'd had before my father died.

Well, as I was saying, I used to go back to bed, like I do now after my little wander round the house, and drop off at once, like floating on the top of the water, so to speak. Then in the morning I heard everything beginning. I think its most interesting to listen to the postman. I know all his calls, and just where he is, by the sound of his boots, and the gates, of course, though I had to test some of them at first to make sure. But of course that's long enough ago. And when he was coming round our way I used to be getting up, though often and often enough in the summer I should be up already, because I find it hard to stay so long in bed after daybreak, but when I used to sleep with my wife, lying there and hearing everything going on outside, the birds and the very early people just before the sun gets really warm, and then later on, the light striking through the branches on the tree in the garden, and making patterns move about on the window and the ceiling, she didn't like me to get up so early, because, though I didn't wake her, she used to feel afterwards as though I had waked her, she said. She used to say it was like me running away. It is queer what ideas you get, half asleep like that. I remember myself once or twice lying there with her beside me on a beautiful summer morning, being suddenly very angry at her sleeping there while I was enjoying it all so much; if she moved, I mean, or anything like that, I felt like saying, " Don't interrupt, Doris." So I got up at once. It isn't any use letting dream ideas like that come into your head. But of course it's different being a woman. I understand that, and Doris's mother, when she was living with us, she thinks the

same; she says it isn't nice to get up so early and walk about the house.

Now what's interesting is that once I did sleep solid like most people do, and that was the beginning of it all. I don't think she was really very well at the time, but I didn't know that—my wife, I mean. She got into such a wax with me, I didn't understand at all. It happened like this. I took a day off as the weather was nice meaning that we might go up to the park for the day. Well, I had mentioned it to her, but she must have forgotten. After breakfast I asked her when she would like to start, and she didn't say she had forgotten, but she told me she had too much work to do. It's very seldom I take a day off. I suppose women always like the place to themselves to clean up. So I said I would go to the recreation ground and have a look at the paper. But I think Doris was not at all well because when I got back from the recreation ground just before lunch she said she wouldn't go with me because I'd been out all morning, and she was too tired with all the work she'd had to do. So we had a bite, and I said we could take the tram and have tea up there, or a car if she felt too tired. But she wouldn't say yes or no. I asked her again just before tea, and then she said she'd been thinking of taking in some lodgers because she was so often lonely, and there were two men coming to look at the house, so she couldn't come out. I said if I'd known we could maybe have booked at the Scala music hall, and that it mightn't be too late. Then, I don't know how, she broke down. She wasn't well, of course. But she quite lost control of herself. I did say I didn't think lodgers would be very convenient and for that she accused me of being selfish and thoughtless and I don't know what all.

Well, it went on like that all the evening, about the lodgers mostly, though I kept on telling her she was to please herself. But in the end she got so feverish, without me saying anything much, a sort of hysterics, I suppose, she ran upstairs to her room, saying I must never come near her again, and she locked the door, so that even when I went up to her with sal-volatile she wouldn't let me in.

But the point is I was so over-wrought myself I went to bed before 10 p.m. and I didn't remember anything at all till morning. I lay there like a piece of wood, hearing nothing, fast asleep, till I was wakened by Doris knocking and calling at me from the door.

She was very angry, naturally, because she'd never had to get up first and light the fire before. She said that she expected that; that I should lie fast asleep the very night she couldn't sleep at all. But though I didn't tell her, I just smiled at that, though it was serious as you see, because so far as I know women are always contrary like that. I think so, after my little experience.

After all I did wake up too late, if you don't mind a little joke. I never thought she would take it as she did. Perhaps if I'd been a bit more wide awake I should have guessed. But I think it must have given her a shock somehow. She never spoke to me all day, and at night there was my supper on the kitchen table with a letter and a note addressed to me. The note was addressed like a letter with " Mr." and the house and all that on it. It said—here it is—" As you have not left me any stamps I cannot post this letter to my mother, who does love me and take care of me, if you don't. So if it's not troubling you, Mr. W—, *too* much, you would post this and oblige Doris M— (that you married)."

" M," that was for her maiden name.

Well, of course, I didn't know about the stamps. I posted the letter at once. And I didn't like to say anything about the note with her in that state.

That night I really scarcely slept at all. I suppose I was really a bit worried because of my wife's being so out of sorts, and in the morning I got up as usual and lit the fire. Then I went to knock at her door to tell her, and she said at once, I thank you, please don't trouble to do any more, no doubt I can manage now. Well, I was surprised, I can tell you. However, I just went on as usual, shaving and all that. All the time till her mother came she was like that, very polite and not a bit herself. So I told her mother she didn't seem well. Perhaps, she said, you haven't been treating her proper. I think I have, I said, but she seems to be easily upset. Well, after a day or so her mother said I was right, and that she wasn't well, and that she must have a long holiday with her.

The next night when I came home there was a lot of packing, not that I noticed particularly, but they were carrying bags and boxes into the drawing room, and her mother said to me not to go in there because they didn't want anything to be disturbed, if I didn't mind. Next day there was a message left for me at

the office. I was very surprised. They just said they'd decided to go that morning, and perhaps if I wanted I could get a woman into the house to clean up in the mornings. Then underneath, in my wife's writing there was a line—But just suit yourself, please don't let me influence you, I wouldn't for the world that would happen—she said.

Then I did begin to get a bit worried, and I wrote to her saying I was only anxious to do what was right for her, and of course, I wouldn't let the house be neglected while she was away. So I sent that off, and looked round the house to see everything was all right, and then I found that a lot of things out of the drawing room had gone. So I wrote again about that, and they sent me a postcard saying that it was quite all right, she'd taken them to put into the room she was staying in at her mother's, to make it a bit more home-like. I think that would be the beginning of August. Then I had to think about the holidays, my fortnight being at the end of September. I wrote and said would she like to go to Scarborough, for a change, and it was her mother that answered. She said they would both come along if they could, and I was to get my rooms wherever I liked. But I replied, No, that I didn't think I would bother going alone. Then after a week my wife wrote and said she had booked rooms for me on the 24th and would expect me to be there then. And she asked me for the spare key to the house, that she'd forgotten, in case she wanted to go there for any of her things.

All the time she was away I was writing to ask how things were and all that, and saying anything that had happened at the house, but they didn't send me nothing but one postcard excepting those letters.

Scarborough was looking lovely when I got there on a Friday evening. Doris wasn't there, though, and they didn't know when she was coming. Of course I was a bit disappointed. But it was very nice all the same. I couldn't quite see the castle out of my window, because the place was a bit of a way from the shore, but you could smell the sea, lovely it was, and hear the gulls too, early in the morning. I was up early and down at the harbour where there was the fishing fleet, all Scotch people, and the smell of the fish and brine was so fresh and strong, it was as good as a meal. I went on to the old quay, too, to look back at the boats. They all huddle together inside it as if it was an arm. I liked that bit best. It was so nice I went down there

every morning, and very nearly spent all day there walking up and down by all the girls gutting and packing the fish. You can spend time without noticing it, watching people like that when its fine. But I went in the gardens, too, and one day I saw a notice about a charabanc trip to Silpho Moor. It sounded so pretty, the name did, I went.

Well, they stopped the motor on the moor, high up, and covered with heather and gorse, so I got out. I never saw anything like it before. It was really strange to me, and I was so interested that I let the motor go on without noticing, and I suppose he didn't notice me being left behind, not being a talkative man. I walked into the moor for a bit, getting rather warm, till I thought I'd sit down on a heather bush; it was full of dust and spiders webs, and had a funny smell. So then I fell to thinking how nice it was, and quiet, like the early morning at home, and that set me off thinking of Doris. I wasn't worried a bit, up there, but I thought it was funny her not coming along, or letting me have a word. The clouds were beautiful. I had to walk back, and going along I suddenly thought something might have happened to prevent her from coming, so as soon as I got in I sent a wire to her mother's but next morning there wasn't any answer, and that decided me to go back. I didn't fancy staying in Scarborough by myself. If I could have done I'd have stayed at an inn I saw when I was coming back from the moor, right on the edge of it, so proud and lonely it looked up there by itself, and it was so cosy inside. But Doris, of course, she's particular, she wouldn't like it outside the town. And if she had come it wouldn't have done to have gone up there. I thought, instead, I'll come up here sometime by myself. So I went home in the afternoon, and I only got back by dark.

When I was walking up the path I noticed that the blinds were down, and that made me wonder if she'd come back. So I went in and called out " Hello!" It sounded like an empty house. I called out again, but you could tell there wasn't anybody there. I hung up my coat and hat. I felt there was something funny about the place, and I walked right into the kitchen, and lit the gas. I said to myself, " Hello! that's queer," as soon as I looked round, because the first thing I noticed was the alarm clock was gone. Then I thought, maybe I left it upstairs when I was going to Scarborough. Then I went into the other rooms, one by one. It was something of a shock

to me. They were empty. All the furniture and pictures and that, had gone, except for a few things. And it was the same upstairs. Well, I was quite frightened when I got to the bottom of the attic flight, and I left all the lights burning and the doors open. There wasn't even any curtains. So I went upstairs to my room. That was just like it always is. But there was a note to me pinned on the counterpane. Well, I felt so upset about it all, I couldn't pick it up for quite a long time. And when I did pick it up, and saw my name on it, I felt somehow like as if I was being dragged into a real fight and expecting to be hit before I knew what it was all about, not fair at all. I left the lights burning and went down to the kitchen with it—

> " This will find you after I've gone for good. I'm never coming back. If you'd treated a young girl like me proper, this would never have happened. But you never did. For selfishness I've never seen such a man, and when I was wanting a man to look after me, time and time again, what did you do but go wandering round the house. But I shan't ever see you again. . . ."

Well. I looked at that for a long time, sitting there in the kitchen. And then I went to bed. And I lay in bed thinking it was all like a story, not real, I mean. Hours and hours I went, getting a bit of sleep and waking up when something said " never coming back." Then I'd think about being selfish, and I couldn't quite understand that. You see, she was always asleep when I used to get up, and never moved at all, and often in the day time she'd tell me she was busy, and didn't want to be bothered with me, and then when she said that, I used to laugh, it was so funny, she was so young. Round and round it went in my head, that I couldn't see what had upset her like that. I couldn't see at all. Then at last I fell asleep again.

I woke up quite suddenly, dreaming that I had said to myself, " Doris has gone for good." It was quite light, and I was wide awake. So I lay there looking at the sky for a minute or two, and then I got up and put on a kettle; and I felt so tempted that I took a cigarette before my tea, a thing I almost never do, but the tobacco smells so nice in the early morning, it's a great temptation. I walked into the other rooms, and found I'd left all the lights on. " My word," I said to myself without thinking, " it's a good job Doris isn't here! what would she say!" So I went into all the rooms, turning out the lights, and pulling

up the blinds, and when I got to her room, I thought to myself, its funny to think a thing like that when Doris has left me. But I couldn't help feeling like that. There was no curtains, you see, and I opened the windows, and the air was so fresh and clean, just making the leaves on the trees turn over a little now and then, and the sky so quiet, and the house so quiet, too, I couldn't help enjoying it, and I said to myself, We'll get along all right. And so we did, or at least I did, for I never heard from her again.

Caryl Brahms

LAMPSHADES

Mrs. Burgess.

THERE now, this one will do very nicely, or no . . . perhaps you prefer the one in the corner, or what about that one near the fire place, or shall we stay here . . . this is nearest, isn't it. You know I always come here to tea, when I am up West. . . It makes a little change. Pretty those lampshades look.

Yes it's a nice bright little place, quite recherchy—and the waitresses are all LADIES, my Dear . . . of course you don't have to leave a tip at the Strand Palace, but then this is so much more homely. I always think there is no place like home, when I was a girl I used to play it on the piano. . . Home Sweet Home with variations. . . Mr. B. Says it was my singing that first made him mean business . . . just a song at twilight I used to sing in those days and the better land . . . lovely. . . Mother nature you know, nothing like Nature though how those awful land girls could go about in trousers. . .

What . . . oh, yes what SHALL we have now, sandwiches or toast or something. What do you advise Miss.

Yes well I'll have tomato sandwiches and you . . .

Oh you MUST eat something it's so bad for the digestion . . . China?

Very well then, one pot of China tea and some brown bread and butter please Miss, and a pot of ordinary tea for one and tomato sandwiches for one and cream cakes to follow.

Oh dear however can they remember it all, I am sure it would drive me half distracted . . . but then I suppose the're used to it, still she looks quite a LADY . . . and that reminds me I got quite a nice little windfall the other day through advertising in the " Lady," an old musquash coat and a dreadful tweed

costume brought me in £10, quite a nice little windfall. Well I wish I had your figure my dear, they say " fair fat and forty " and that fits me down to the ground, Mr. B. is forever chafing me about it . . . buxom Bella he calls me, and the other day I laughed till I cried. . .

Oh thank you, you have been quick . . . yes the ORDINARY for me and the CHINA for her . . . quite a Lady . . . now what was I saying . . . yes . . . we'll both be mother . . . I always think that no one can pour out tea like yourself . . . myself I mean . . . what was I saying when she brought the tea . . . Oh well it's gone now never mind . . . you know Mr. B. says I've got a memory like a sieve.

Well what have you been doing lately.

. . . funny girl Muriel so quiet . . . not a bit of go in her . . . nice little thing though . . . Might try a yellow shade on the standard lamp in the drawing room. . .

Well now you know when I was a girl I was passionately fond of reading . . . I read ALL Rita's books . . . they're lovely . . . yes . . . and Mrs. Humphrey Ward's but lately I can't seem to settle down to it . . . they don't write what I call BOOKS these days . . . you know Mr. B. is a very keen reader, and he raved about a book called " If Winter Comes " but I couldn't get through it . . . Swing High and Swing Low the maids were called . . . now that's a pretty tune for you. . .

Tarti tarti Tarti ta ta ta tarti ta ta. . .

The piano used to go like that. " Veronica," I think it came from. You know I had a cousin Vera . . . at least she was Mr. B.'s cousin . . . who used to play the harp . . . poor thing she went off into a decline and only 23 . . . oh well such is life!

Have this nice little éclair.

Oh but you must you haven't had anything.

No need to bant.

. . . Not everybody's fancy . . . skinny I call her. . .

Well if you won't, you won't.

No, thank you dear, I don't smoke, but don't mind me, you light up.

Yes we often listen in of a night time . . . it helps to pass the time away . . . Satan finds some mischief yet for idle hands to do not that mine are ever idle . . . I take after poor mother you know . . . always busy . . . I shall never forget the time when . . .

No dear, I didn't ask the time . . . you know Mr. B. has often begged me to wear a wrist watch, but I always keep this little friend pinned on me . . . then I can't lose it . . . my dear the umbrellas I've lost . . . why only the other day I said to Mr. B. we could set up a little business in the things I've lost, if we found them I mean of course. I remember when we were first engaged Mr. B. gave me a beautiful bangle and I went and left it in a bathing machine.

Have you been to many shows lately.

No, I can't say I have, but Mr. B. and I often pop into the Victoria Palace of an evening . . . well I suppose we must follow the swallows back home . . . now where did I put that parcel . . . where did I . . . ah here it is . . . Oh do I pay at the desk? . . .

. . . No, on the whole I don't think I'll change that lampshade . . . bit too much on the bilious side . . . and scarlet's such a nice cheerful colour. . .

You know, my Dear, I'm sure that girl's a LADY. . .

Muriel Keene.

. . . Great yellow lampshade, floating . . . spreading a warm glow . . . hazy and warm. . .

THIS table will do very nicely I think.

. . . If only she'd make her mind up . . . what does it matter where you sit as long as you can become part of this warm glow . . . better remark on the place. . .

What a quaint little haunt; what's this Menu card say. . .

" Mrs. Brown's Little Tea Rooms.
Luncheons Too."

. . . How can anyone expect you to paint in words this floating glow . . . rotten things words . . . Anyone coming in will see us in the glow . . . a part of it . . . better say something . . . What's that . . . change . . . Change here for Charing Cross . . . MAKES a change, that's it . . . Well she's off on her girlhood days now so I needn't bother . . . Hard seat . . . in keeping with the place somehow . . . nice touch that vermillion line dividing the black from the corn colour . . . over by the window oranges in a blue basin . . . the night nursery . . . Miss Smith bending over her . . . " No, darling you can't have a cold drink till the old whezes have gone " . . . " Oh, but Mippy jus a moutful, jus to keep my tongue from clamming . . ." . . . " Well, if you promise to turn over and

try to sleep again I'll get you some orange juice " . . . The fire dancing on the ceiling . . . dancing to the whezes in her chest . . . dancing to the whistling of the steam kettle . . . Here's the waitress. . .

What shall we order Mr. Burgess.

. . . both of us in the past . . . so different but yet the same. . .

Just a pot of tea for me please, I'm not very hungry . . . I . . .

Well then if I MUST . . . some brown bread and butter. . .

Hope they bring it rolled like mother used to have it on second Sundays. . .

China please. . .

. . . Thank goodness she's off again . . . What does it matter if the waitress is a lady . . . impertinent to remark on it . . . she has a faculty for seizing on the unimportant . . . what really counts is that she works in this yellow glow . . . cold morning . . . waitress hurries up Shaftesbury Avenue . . . shudders with cold . . . turns into the stairway and hesitates at the bend . . . thrusts aside the private Her of the dream world she'd been treading and enters the wonderful yellow mist . . . merges into it . . . wonderful to work in yellow soft glow . . . How could they help being sunny and polite . . . clouds of steam and marble top tables . . . tea slopping about . . . clatter . . . clatter . . . crash . . . one kate and sydney pie and a banana please Miss, and sharp please Miss . . . spectacled youth . . . stooping shoulders . . . an avid faced typist . . . a fat blousy woman . . . some old joke about once they threw the Christians to the lions and now the Lyons feed the Christians . . . but here a golden spell . . . Perhaps the yellow lampshades spin it, floating in the mist . . . Pity they have Paisley uniforms . . . fusty stuff Paisley . . . oh it isn't rolled, never mind. . .

Shall we each pour out our own?

Something intellectual about brown bread . . . Bernard Shaw eating a raw carrot . . . slices of brown bread . . . shining white hair . . . do vegetarians eat their vegetables raw no, of course not, they do them up with nuts and stuffing and . . . funny steamy smell . . . SHEARNS . . . stupid of me, things . . . she's looking at me . . . expecting something . . . quick . . . doing lately? . . .

Oh nothing very exciting . . . I've been staying in and reading rather a lot you see. . .

. . . She's off again . . . funny meeting Sarah Gamp in the life . . . she'd look different . . . but without the Dickensian touch their minds must be rather alike . . . pretty blue china spoilt by my brown bread crumbs . . . disgusting habit eating . . . swallow . . . down . . . down . . . down through reddish tubes and on to a reddish layer like a table . . . one tremendous inward clutch . . . CLUTCH . . . the layer turns slowly over . . . disgusting. . .

No, thank you Mrs. Burgess . . . I've made a very good tea for me. Do you smoke . . . Well if you're quite sure you don't mind . . . Waifs and Strays . . . how do they know the difference between a waif and stray . . . damn the match has caught the draught . . . another . . . perhaps the waifs are boys . . . pfp . . . pfp . . . and the strays . . . pfpfp . . . pfpf . . . pfpfp . . . girls . . . WHW . . . lovely to be sitting here and puffing my grey smoke into the atmosphere . . . it floats away and joins the golden glow . . . whw . . . helping to make the golden glow . . . whw . . . wish I could blow rings . . . Luxury . . . slender cigarette holder and rings of smoke floating away to the great yellow lamp . . . whw . . . if someone offered me a Brangwyn or a Beardsley I'd choose . . . I don't know what I'd choose . . . no immediate need for me to get agitated . . . doesn't happen to people like us old dear . . . whw.

It's ten past five, oh I beg your pardon I thought you asked the time.

Must try and listen . . . whw . . . why does she call her husband Mr. B. . . . " Mr. B. your bath is getting cold." " Mr. B. turn the light out " . . . but would one turn the light out . . . surely and yet . . . a yellow walled room and a yellow light shining on you as you wait . . . whw. . .

Are you wireless enthusiasts?

. . . 2L.O. calling . . . Aunty Geraldine . . . many happy returns to Little Tommy Green . . . Aunt Geraldine. . .

Little Tommy Green
Who pulled her out,
Little Tommy Stout. . .

whw. . .

You left the bangle in a bathing machine . . . what a shame.

Mrs. Burgess in red twill . . . Mr. B. in blue and white stripes . . . submerged to the waist . . . holding hands and bobbing . . . the red twill clings like a burst balloon when you stretch it over your finger . . . gross . . . why doesn't she keep under the water . . . horrible to be fat . . . what? . . . shows? . . . what shows? . . . WHAT? . . . oh yes SHOWS . . .

I went down to see the new Playfair thing on Wednesday . . . do you ever go to Hammersmith . . . the Lyric Hammersmith I mean . . . whw. . .

No, I don't know the Victoria Palace. . .

They're changing the guard at Buckingham Palace.

Christopher Robin went down with Alice. . .

Marvellous to be one of Mr. Punch's young men . . . whw . . . want to be alone to think about the mellow glow . . . in your own flat thinking . . . about the glow . . . whw . . . remembering the yellow spell woven by the floating lampshades . . . whw. . .

Mrs. Burgess—Later.

Hullo, Hullo, Mrs. Burgess speaking—oh is that you Clara . . . Yes, my Dear, I went down West with Muriel Keene . . . Funny girl Muriel . . . No GO in her. . .

Robert Odo Cross

EVENING SESSION

I SAT on a hard green chair, the kind you pay a penny for throughout all England and can use again in the afternoon if (and here's where the collector has his subtle laugh) you have kept your ticket; the kind that sit in couples under the green parasols of plane trees in summer, or lean tilted shoulder on shoulder like lines of tipsy soldiers standing easy; the kind that in winter lie or stand pressed close together in flattened congregation, roped round, tarpaulin clad, under the black bare frames of the plane trees.

My green chair was a soldier among soldiers. It knew its place in circular attention to the bandstand, seventh from the left in the fourth row from the front, and, a well trained unit, it was inconspicuous, inseparable from the mass, without identity except for the enamel plate inscribed Seahaven Borough Council No. 738 which it carried upon its back.

The evening was dark and a certain freshness was eagerly seized upon by all who had suffered from a peculiarly stifling August day. There was a curious feeling of indecent intimacy such as only warm summer evenings know how to thrust upon one, and the fact that windows, usually lace-enshrouded and shuttered, were now opened to the world and that men and women were now walking up and down with no more clothing on than they would have worn indoors added to one's sense of intramural proximity.

Fragmentary though they were, tangents glancing off one up into the night air, I resented the snatches of conversation uttered by the passers by who, I felt, had no right thus to impose, however slightly, their mediocre lives upon me unwilling. The gas jets on landings or over mantelpieces seemed also in the conspiracy to draw my attention to details of the unappetising lives of dwellers in pensions and lodgings along the front. The bright green glare of a score of Mazda cajoled me to examine, here an old woman's evening in a downstairs room, surrounded by

knick-knacks, who filled her life with the task (Herculean in its inexhaustibility) of making Balaclava helmets for fishermen, there of a young girl shaking sand from her shoes on to the sill of an upper room. But now the gas mantles had a rival. Quite suddenly and without any warning a whole army came on the scene and joined in battle with them. For fully forty seconds the battle raged furiously round me, at the end of which the " fairy lights " won and the gas mantles retired into an inconspicuous background.

The shutters were being rolled up and music stands unfolded in the bandstand, which now that it was outlined in all directions, appeared as a colossal cottage loaf in a hybrid Turkish manner. Soon they started to play, these score of men with their waisted conductor. What had music to do with the British Army?

What had it got to do with the twenty stalwarts up there? Mouth organs, we all know, keep up men's spirits on the march, but was that any excuse for all this display of brass and red cloth, for all these waxed moustaches and tassels?

Any way, there they were playing along, without the slightest fervour ruffling the calm placidity of their red faces with distended cheeks, their bull necks thick and veined in motionless inscrutability above their yet more scarlet coats. I was surprised to see that they were already embarked upon the third number of their programme, the Offenbach overture, and some equally traditional piece as second, having dissolved imperceptibly into the endemic cadences of the Cavalleria Rusticana. By this time the audience was greatly increased, and whether it was due to this, or because they had their own conception of " southern fire " the next number, which was Carmen, was endowed with all the vitality that had been denied to its predecessors.

I was enjoying myself! Enjoying myself as I had not done for years; as I had not done since before plucking the apple of the tree of knowledge. Someday it was imperative that I should know that Puccini, Verdi and the rest of them were " Popular Classics " and as such must necessarily be third-rate. That was inevitable, as that Adam should discover he was naked, but once that was firmly established, once driven from the garden, there was no reason in time why one should not enjoy, if from a different aspect, the sensual bombast of these masters of melody.

Again I loved Faust, Carmen, Tosca, Bohème, and in my heart

I pitied and despised those who perforce leaving their original Eden had wandered disappointed among the byeways of Bach without ever finding the other garden of experience. I thought of the long and heartrending discussions I had had with people who had left the Eden where only fools may stay and had strayed ever since with a dark hatred of Wagner set in their hearts.

" Why do you like Opera?" they would say, " You an intelligent and in all other respects educated man, you can't really like Gounod."

And I would answer " But I assure you I do."

Then there were the other kind who said " I do like good music. Fox-trots? you surely dont go in for those? You an intelligent person. I can't bear them. Give me good music. The Meistersingers or the Indian Love Lyrics for me. Something like that—"

I was disturbed in my reflections by a certain rhythmic vibration to which I had probably been subjected for some minutes but which at the outset of the Toreador's song had been increased to such an extent as to have broken through the strata of subconscious thought where I had been vaguely aware of its presence and rudely cut short the sequence of my musings. I turned round to the old man behind me. " Do you mind not doing that, please," I said, and immediately the rhythmic disturbance ceased, the ex-colonel withdrawing his feet from my chair.

I looked at the faces round me expressing satisfaction, anticipation, vague desires unrealised, unknown, satiety, but above all satisfaction. Carmen's song was doing its task, the angular discordancies of everyday life were being smoothed and rounded in the voluptuously curving robes of Bizet's glucose melody.

In front there was a couple who obviously " liked good music," an old woman in palpitating violet, massive and indomitable, with her little husband whom only the law of contrasts could have made her choose, and whom she must doubtless marshall to every evening concert throughout the season since whenever there was applause she would smile and look round with an expression of " I told you so. Good music. Nothing like it," to the audience, and a knowing shake of the head to the conductor, with whom she felt herself to be in league.

On my left was an interesting specimen—Adam and Eve at a

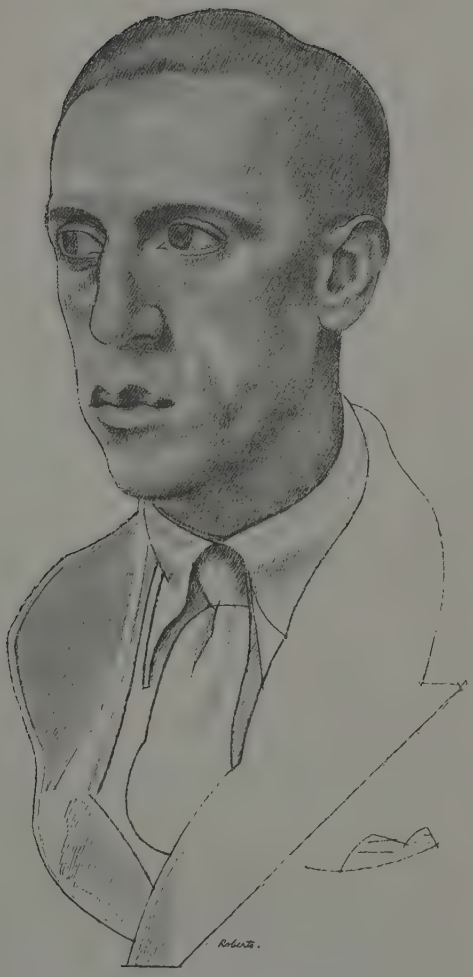
period just subsequent to the Fall. The young couple reclined, as far as that was possible on the prim green seats, their nearer arms entwined, their other hands touching over a book which they were pretending to read together. Every now and then one of them would guiltily say, " Have you finished ?" and the other, called back from some distant journey taken on the rapid wings of melody, would answer vaguely, " Yes! have you?" and another page would be turned. The book serving as it did so many purposes (that of a substitute for conversation; that of a reason for their proximity; that of the supposed centralization of the thoughts of both of them on a common point) had for me but one significance of first-rate importance. It was manifestly clear that one, perhaps both, of them was ashamed to bask naked in the sticky heat of Bizet's sensuality. They were enjoying it, but only after having first deceived the crowd around them, each other, and possibly themselves by a pretence at reading. For them the fig leaf!

Somewhere further along, however, the pre-Fall picture of a Midland magnate reassured one of the age of innocence. Buttonholed, he sat with knees apart swinging his pendulous paunch to the rhythm of the tune. His short little legs on either side of his belly kept time with the vibrations which were shooting through his body, and which were mesmerising him little by little into a state of comatose repleteness. Soon it was only a pudgy hand strumming on a fleshy thigh that sent into the void a thousand scintillations from the solitaire in its thick band of gold, to be lost with the fast dispersing melody in the black night air.

Tune succeeded tune with amazing congruity and through the ocean of viscous sentiment one recognised from time to time such familiar lightships as Toselli's Serenade, or Gems from the Fille de Madame Angot.

And then suddenly it came! We had been waiting for it, unconsciously, every one of us, all evening, and when it came we could not identify it, put a name to it. But it was evident that it needed the aid of no inspiring title to work its miracle.

At its opening bars, at its measured hesitation before elaborating on the simple opening melody already the hands of the lovers had begun to clasp more passionately, already the cabalist smile of the " music-lover " in front had increased so as to appear a positive invitation to the conductor to whom she



Drawing of RHYS DAVIES
by William Roberts

felt so spiritually united. Even the rhythmic stamping of the ex-colonel had given place to some less crudely barbaric reaction the only manifestations of which were found in a head bent over folded arms and a deep slow breathing.

What was this melody whose position in the social hierarchy of music I could not place? From the kaleidoscope of anachronistic association what could one pick out that might serve as a mark for identification?

In one little phrase I followed a lady in purple sequins who twirled on the arm of a tall unbending man. Round and round she went, bobbing up and down as if she had one leg shorter than the other, making in her passage an undulating graph like a child's idea of drawing a seascape. Just as I hoped that I might be able to identify the waltz to the rhythm of which she was revolving—for waltz it was, so much she had taught me—lady, gentleman faded with the brilliant gas-lit ballroom into nothingness as the large grey shape of a " marquee " loomed up damp and unhappy in a soggy wheelmarked field. The band seemed to have taken on afresh a brassy harshness where previously one had been aware only of the insinuation of strings, and as the rain drizzled down and the girl guides ran races the local band gallantly pursued its indomitable course, here falling behind, here rushing in front, always resolute around their cornetted conductor. What was this waltz they played at every village fëte? I looked in vain to find the secret on the lips of Lady Double-Barell who had kindly consented to give away the prizes but she did no more than flutter her ostrich boa and disappear behind the linen grained expanse of a lovers' " close-up."

The light flickered, their black lips met, under a gingham overall and a viyella shirt " two hearts beat as one," and I recognised again the melody which had signalled like the singing of a kettle the moments when the Drama in 5 parts had reached boiling point.

" Just one moment," I wanted to say to them, " I wont keep you a second, but can you just tell me what that waltz is that accompanies you in your more intimate moments?" But already they had framed themselves in the midst of an all-embracing heart which before I could make myself heard had vanished with the picture it enframed to be succeeded by an interval slide " Coming Events cast their shadows before them. Do not fail

to see Nick Harvey with Queenie Redford in the Desert Flower coming to this theatre next Monday."

Alas! I thought, all is lost. The last people who could tell me the name of this tune have vanished from the screen and I am left in the dark without the prospect of ever remembering what it was.

I sat disconsolately, absorbed in the thoughts of my frustrated efforts, when of a sudden a tall form erect beside me recalled me to the present and immediate surroundings. "How much?" "Tuppence," said the black shape at the same time ringing a bell at his middle. "Thanks! Ah, wait a minute. Could you possibly tell me what was the name of the last thing they played?" "'Fraid not. Want a programme?" "How much?" "Tuppence." Taking the slip of paper I ran my finger down the list. Of course, I thought, how silly of me. I knew perfectly well all the time!

Nancy Cunard

SIMULTANEOUS

AT one time
The blue hyacinths under Orvieto—
At one time
A letter, a letter and a letter—
At one time sleepless,
Through rain the nightingale sang from the river island—
At one time Montparnasse,
And all night's gloss
Splendour of shadow on shadow
With the exact flower
Of the liqueur in its glass.

Time runs, but thought (or what) comes
Seated between these damaged table-tops,
Sense of what zones, what simultaneous time-sense?

Then in Ravenna
The dust is turned to dew
By moonlight, and the exact
Splayed ox-feet sleep that dragged the sugar-beet
To dry maremmas
Past San Apollinare
Fuori Mure.

In Calais Roads
The foam-quilt sags and swells,
Exact are the land's beacons to the sea—
Twin arms crossed, thrown across sleep and a nightwind.
Time falls from unseen bells
On Calais quays (that were sometime a heart's keys).

Red bryony
Steeps in loose night-air
Swelling, October crumples the hedge.
Or the wind's in the ash, opening the seed-pods.
(The revolution in the weeds—
Rain somewhere. Rain suggests
Their dissolution to the seeds.)

Midnight,
While some protract their trades
Forcing the line—sleep takes them,
But the baker
Cools at the sill, yeasts raise his auburn flour.
Midnight.
And trains perambulate—(o noctis equi)
Faust
Is in hell that would have stopped the horses of night
In their gallops, that would have galloped a-top of them
But was outpaced, overthrown for too exact questioning.
And in Albi
Les orguilleux sus des roues continuellement
(hell's fading fresco)
And in Torcello
The mud-frogs now, and on all unknown
Ripe watery wastes
The rich, dead silence.
Silence—or a nightwind on a lawn
Turning the pages, one by one, of a forgotten book.

Rhys Davies

AARON

YOUNG AARON POWELL had been the butt of all the children in the street when they felt in a mood for teasing. Not really because of his hunched back and his dwarfish legs, or the great stone-like heaviness of his face, but because, when fun was poked at him, his language was such a funny mixture of bawdy Welsh and English words. He could rage like a lion, his smouldering eyes yellow with flame, and, rushing on the scattering and shrieking children, loosen upon them a torrent of abuse quite as good as grown-up people used. Lately, however—since he had passed his thirteenth birthday—a new and dangerous strength developed in him, and if anyone annoyed him, they suddenly felt an iron-hard fist inflicted upon them. So he was attacked now only when the boys were gathered in a gang together, and the girls contented themselves with a snigger or a call of derision.

Aaron had been born to John and Katie Powell, and because Katie was English, in their drunken quarrels John often blamed his wife for their child's deformity.

"Married a healthy Welsh girl I should have," he would bawl. "Rotten is the old English race. Heathenish and damned."

She would cry satirically:

"That's why they rule you, is it? You're a lot of idiots and fools. Think because you've got thousands of chapels you're God's own people. But it's a country of bloody hypocrites. That's what this is. Ha. you can shout about the English! But they conquered you—they rule you."

It was to John's credit that he did not let these insults to his country go unreproved; he beat the woman until weals stood out upon her hard flesh.

He had met her in the slums of Cardiff as he was returning home from a bank-holiday trip down the Bristol Channel. She had been a waitress in a little dockside café. Later he married

her and brought her to the Valley, to this street of colliers' dwellings. She struggled to mix with the Welsh women and understand the life. But she finally took to drink and, as they said, dragged her husband down with her to the pots of Satan. Their's was the black house of the street, and when the deformed Aaron was born to them, the people were justified in their God.

Sometimes the house was peaceful. The public-houses being closed on Sunday, in the evening Katie would read *The News of The World* and usually her husband went, somewhat sheepishly, to the chapel of his boyhood, taking Aaron with him and returning home quietly to a meat supper. Then after the meal the father would try and talk to his son. He would question the boy concerning his liking for the world and the people within it.

But Aaron always seemed to elude him. They were never really aware of each other. And the mother, in the rare occasions when she tried to fathom the recesses of his mind, had as little success. These recesses seemed to be walled in by barriers of stony indifference to them.

He seemed to live a peculiar existence of his own. He would mutter to himself odd syllables that had no meaning, and he brooded for hours over the Old Testament. Then he would take a scrap of paper and make a drawing of some person of the Bible. The people were always nude, the women possessing a male attribute. There was a satiric talent in these pictures. His great ambition was to make a drawing of God, but whenever he sat down to try he could not imagine what God was like, and so he had to content himself with some other Biblical character.

" Aaron, get out of my sight," his mother would screech. " Do you want to end in the madhouse! Go out and play with the other boys." And she muttered to herself, " Christ, what have I done to bring such a brat into the world!"

. . . . . .

He liked girls. If only one of the girls in the street would be kind to him! If only one of them lay in his arms and he kissed her lips! The thought of it made his mouth dry. He knew he was ugly and not as other boys, but he would do anything, more than any other boy, for a girl that would let him kiss and fondle her.

He clasped his arms round his crooked body and bit his teeth deep into his lip as he thought of it. And his emaciated legs shook convulsively as he imagined the soft full limbs of girls

before him. If only one girl would love him! There were so many of them—surely there was one who could be fond of him.

And, always gazing hungrily at the girls in the street, he thought there was one, Dilys Pritchard, who looked at him with less hostility than the rest.

She was about his own age and once had pushed her tongue out at him and when he stopped and gazed at her angrily, called to him in a voice of fear:

"All right, Aaron Powell, not making fun of you am I. But there's savage you always look! Put more smiles on your face and the girls will like you then."

He gazed into her face. Her eyes were black and looked at him with curiosity. And she had full lips, red and cool as a little rose: her body was nice and tall. As she ran off, with a laugh, he looked at her legs, that were strong and dancing with life. . .

In school, he had heard boys say things about girls. But were they true! He knew men and women lived and slept together when they were fond of each other. But was it true that their bodies were different? Was that why they dressed differently? There was some mystery about it. He could not imagine how girls were different to boys. But there was something.

He waited for the opportunity to speak again to Dilys Pritchard, alone. When it came, he asked her, somewhat furtively:

"Walk out with me some evening, Dilys Pritchard?"

They were alone near the river, and it was getting dark. The young girl looked at him, first with surprise on her rather shifty face, then indignation, which was quickly followed by horror. But she was cautious. There was a strange expression on Aaron's face.

"What for, Aaron Powell?"

"Go on now," he answered, watching her closely, "don't you pretend."

She giggled, but a little fearfully, and moved a step away. He followed and took hold of her arm. The thick, heavy skin of his face, thrust near her's, seemed slimy like a toad's, and the grip of his hand was bony and hard. She was about to scream. But tears suddenly came from his eyes and he whispered softly:

"Love you I do, Dilys."

She snatched her arm away.

" Silly and soft you are."

His great head shook. And she suddenly darted away and sped up the hill, where the houses were, and people. His eyes had seemed like great spiders in the wrinkled web of his face.

. . . . . .

That night, meeting the other girls at the end of the street, Dilys Pritchard related, amid laughter, what had passed.

They leaned together and whispered and giggled, and finally it was decided to teach Aaron Powell " a lesson."

. . . . . .

He wept as he walked home. But later his mood turned to fury and he would have liked to pull Dilys Pritchard's hair and shake her and stamp and spit on her.

He would never make friends with a girl. And what the boys said about kissing girls—ach y fi, he would rather kiss Sam Jones' dirty old nanny-goat.

But when he got to bed and started to brood again, the darkness seemed full of girls' faces and their bodies. He beat the bed in terror, biting into the pillow, and moaned like a beast in pain. But they would not let him alone—the faces peered at him derisively, and the bodies moved towards him and drew back—the soft bodies, forever draped and covered, coming towards him maddeningly, then retreating, convulsed with laughter.

When he got down in the morning, his face greyer than ever, his mother muttered again her continual complaint :

" Jesus, Jesus, what have I done to bring such a brat into the world!"

He ate his breakfast in silence, his eyes heavy and dim as an old man's. But he bit his bread viciously and clawed the cup of tea, altogether like a savage animal whose stomach craves food. . .

Then later in the day Dilys Pritchard approached him and said, lifting her eyelids coyly :

" Say you want to walk out with me, Aaron Powell?"

He looked at her fiercely.

" Making fun of me you are."

" No indeed, Aaron. Like you I do. Let us go for a walk on the mountain to-night."

Her words made the blood in his veins rise like a flood, and his face was as though illumined.

They made arrangements to meet at a certain place. And all the rest of the day he felt that the world had become lovely and different. When he met her, he walked beside her proudly, with a curious trot, putting his knees well forward like a brisk pony. And his head, top-heavy and hirsute, was held as though he felt himself a king.

They talked on various subjects—the chapel, school, the coming local eisteddfod. Dilys informed him:

"A birthday I have on Saturday."

"Giving a party you are?"

"Perhaps," she said doubtfully.

"A present I will buy you," he said royally. "Say what you would like."

She squinted down at him and concealed a little smile. He persisted, and she admitted there was a string of green beads she had admired in a certain shop window.

"What price they were?" he asked.

"Four and six," she said in a small voice.

He gasped. He hadn't even sixpence. But she said:

"Teasing you I was. No beads will you buy me."

And there seemed to be veiled laughter in her voice.

They climbed the hill. On the top there was the silence of approaching night and it seemed that they were the only lovers in that loneliness. Some distance away there was an enclosure built round with walls of loose stones. Dilys said:

"Let us go and sit by the wall. Not so windy will it be there."

Already his senses were alert and throbbing almost painfully. When they had sat against the wall he could scarcely speak coherently. He took her hand.

She looked at him. A little foam had gathered at his lips. And again her mouth seemed to tighten with laughter. She kept on glancing now and again over his head and along the wall.

It was getting darker.

"Let me kiss you," he said, taking hold of her body tightly.

She let herself be kissed. He began to slobber excitedly. And his eyes were large and yearning.

"Dilys!" he said suddenly, in a voice of pain.

"What?" she asked. Her silence and passivity had been amazing, for she was almost sick with loathing.

"Buy you those beads I will," he said. He would get the

money somehow. And he continued after a pause, in a trembling voice, " If do something for me you will."

" What?" she asked again.

" Let me see you naked," he said, with sudden strength in his voice.

She sat upright quickly. Now she was really afraid. And indignant.

" Aaron Powell," she cried angrily, " shocking you are. See me naked indeed! What next!"

" No harm is there in it," he muttered, staring at her with obsessed eyes. .

She suddenly uttered a shrill call, like a whistle. And immediately from a broken opening in the wall trooped a gang of girls, her friends of the street. They raced towards the couple, shrieking with laughter.

Both Aaron and Dilys stood up quickly. Dilys screamed, pointing at the petrified Aaron :

" Catch the old beast. What think you, girls! Wanted to see me naked he did!"

In a moment they were upon him like a pack of barking dogs. He was strong, and he kicked, bit, and struggled with savage ferocity. But their female strength overwhelmed him and he lay panting and pinned down securely at last. And with terrible horror he realised their intention.

Screaming, bawling, laughing, they fumbled at the braces that held his trousers up, and in a few moments the garment was pulled away from him. And amid renewed shrieks his loins and limbs lay exposed before them.

Then with the swiftness of frightened animals they sprang from him and raced away, the girl who held the trousers dropped the garment with a scream.

He lay exhausted, panting with such intensity that his heart seemed about to burst. A slight moaning came from his lips, his hands opened and closed convulsively, and the thin naked legs twitched in spasms that lifted them from the ground. Presently he tried to get up, and raising himself, saw again his exposed limbs.

He fell back again, flat on the grass, and with his mouth pressed into the earth, lay shuddering with murderous rage. Visions of gleaming knives, torn bodies spattered with blood-slashed faces, passed through his mind. He felt he would cover the world with blood.

. . . . . .

During the next two days he went about with a stony face, shut and mute. Only his eyes gleamed with a yellowish vitality, sunk in the dark webbed skin. In the evenings he read the Old Testament for hours, with owlish calm, greatly irritating his mother, who, however, feared to disturb him. There seemed to be a new and ominous warning in his look.

The next day, Friday, he demanded of her four shillings and sixpence.

" Are you daft?" she asked.

He took up a knife and laid a finger on the table.

" Cut this finger off I will," he said, staring at her with his mad eyes, " if you don't give me the money."

Her dissipated face became pale and frightened. She knew his threats. She muttered something about his father, and he laid the edge of the knife on his finger and stretched back his lips.

He got the money and bought the string of green beads in the shop Dilys Pritchard had mentioned. And that evening he hung about the street, and when he saw her at last, called to her :

" Dilys Pritchard, a surprise I have for you."

She was going to flee, but his smile was so ingratiating that she stopped and began to titter.

" A lesson I thought you have had," she said boldly.

His eyelids twitched. Ignoring her remark, he said :

" Bought those beads I have. For you."

" Go on. Where are they? she asked incredulously.

" In our coal-house. Hide them from my mother I had to. Come you with me now and you shall have them. Forgiven you I have and five shillings I had in my money-box."

She looked at him suspiciously. But he described the beads with such glowing language and assured her that he didn't expect anything for them, that she went with him. After all, he was in love with her and half-daft, she thought.

They went down the lane that runs past the entrances to the back gardens. At the end of each garden was a little building divided into two portions—one a water-closet and the other a coal-house.

" Come in," he invited her, opening the door.

It was dusk. But she followed, excited by the thought of the coming gift. In the coal-house there was a box, and he brushed the dust from the top with his sleeve and invited her to sit down.

He lit a candle and shut the door, saying:

"Some one might see us, and there's bad it would look!"

Then he jumped on the pile of coal and drew from a ledge a packet.

"Want to put them on you I do," he said, taking the string of beads out. "And glad I'll be to have given you a present."

She looked at the beads greedily and simpered with delight. She thought what envy the present would cause. So she let him do as he wanted and he went behind her to fasten the clasp.

Then swiftly he picked up a large lump of coal and raised it aloft.

With all his fierce strength he crashed it down on her head. She uttered a short quick cry and fell forward. He slipped the fallen beads round her throat and drew them tight, tight. . . The blood flew through his veins, he dribbled over her bright hair, and his eyes protruded in mad exultance.

She lay on the ground, her hair in the coal-dust, and for some minutes he stood staring down at her without movement. Then, after fastening the door securely, he picked her up and sat her on the box, her body leaning against the side of the shed. And he began to take her clothes off, one by one, with increasing haste, tearing the garments that he could not get away easily.

At last she was naked before him.

He panted like an animal that has struggled to the death and sank to the floor, squatting down before the dead naked young girl. He bowed his head and stared at her . . . and now all the pain of his life was in his eyes.

He wanted to touch the smooth delicate skin of the thighs and body, handle her gently, as though she were a flower. Her hair lay all wild over her face. Her body was so white. Such beauty. He thought he must die from looking at her.

But thin streams of blood began to trickle from her hair, on to the petals of her shoulders. And when he saw that blood he sprang up with a cry and clawed at the door.

. . . . . .

It was almost dark. He ran, ran as fast as his shuddering legs could carry him, through lanes, past people at corners, houses, and at last past the colliery, that sprawled twinkling with lights at the end of the vale. Here all was deserted and silent, except for the throbbing of the great engine in the near power-house. Now he was on the side of the hill that shuts in

the vale, and below him gleamed faintly the little lake that supplied the colliery with water.

He sat down and began to take off his clothes. And while he did this he cried aloud in a mad chant:

"My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust; my skin is broken and become loathsome . . ."

Standing up in his malformed nudity, he gazed like an idiot at the tranquil sky, and continued:

"Naked I came into the earth and naked I shall return. Why did I not die in the womb, why did I come forth to the clay . . ? I hate you, God. I want to spit on you. Why brought you me forth crooked and ugly? I hate you. Let me go down to the dwellings of Satan."

And like a monstrous caricature leaping in that hollow vale he ran shrieking down the hill, to the silent water.

CLARION AND VIOLIN

(*Translated from the Czech by Paul Selver.*)

POTENT delight and dismay
Without a cry shalt thou attest:
Upon some sequestered spray
The Fire-Bird shall rest.

We are men in the midst of men,
Not gods whom titans assail;
The world crumbles not. Be tranquil, then,—
What shall trumpets and drums avail?

Death, love, the body with the soul therein,
Thy life in the earthy zone,
On lute and cello and violin
Shall thou intone.

Aldous Huxley

SMITHFIELD

SEE the gay Butcher, who with magic steel
Trans-beefs the ox and turns the calf to veal;
Unspheres the Heartspoon, cleaves the fatted Chucks:
Carves Tabs and Ponies, Gonister and Plucks;
Divides the Griskin from the Slift and Flaps,
Spits the Brack Tortoise, triturates the Knaps;
Lays Wink by Skink and with unfeeling blade
Divorces Hamkin from her clinging Splade;
While Ronds, Rann, Haslet chant in chorus sweet:
" The proper Diet of Mankind is Meat."

THE PRAYER OF A. O. BARNABOOTH

(*Translated by Adrian Collins*).

WHEN years have passed, and I am in the tomb,
And things are just the same as they are now,
While still the cabs come crashing through the gloom,
Be I the cool hand on some burning brow,—
The brow of one who dreams of poetry,
And carols as he rides, although the air
Be thick and yellow, and he can scarce descry
The buildings looming black in Russell Square.

Be I some sweet thought cherished, undefined,
Amid the city's rumour secretly,
A moment's refuge from the whirling wind,
In Vanity Fair, for children gone astray;
And be my first steps in eternity
Eased with a little moss, on All Saints' Day.

HEAD STUDY
BY JACOB KRAMER

Faith Compton Mackenzie

MISS MABEL EBONY

BRON EDGE in her white cape climbed the rocky grey mountain. Her path was decorated with anemones, cyclamen, and orchids like small minarets. Sometimes a solitary olive tree gave her a moment's delicate shade. Rosemary and lentisk filled the air with bitter-sweetness; the shadows in the rocks were blue as the few trails of lithospermum that still lingered. She pressed forward eagerly, as though a lover were awaiting her up there in the azure. She was filled with the glamour of the Italian day. In Spiaggia one's senses play a quintet in a thousand movements; there is no hour that is not filled with some sensuous delight. The delight of to-day was to be the mountain garden. In this sweet enclosure the tulips would be in full bloom, the irises and the last of the daffodils.

The garden was not quite at the top. There was an untidy little shrine strewn with dead and dying wild flowers; then the path branched to the right for the topmost height where one could get gloriously drunk on half a glass of wine if the peasant who sold it happened to be there. But Bron's path was straight on towards the hermit's chapel. Half-way along this flat path a valley appeared to the left, and down in the valley was the garden, which was flung over the spare peasant cultivations like a gay rug. Bron always stood on the path above and contemplated the strangely fascinating landscape before she descended to the garden. On each side of the valley the mountain grimly pierced the blazing sky, and between these austere battlements there was a vista of the sea in the distance, softly and meltingly blue, and Vesuvius wearing its white plume, always with an air, and always at a different angle.

Here in the mountain valley was complete solitude and a silence that held the heavens in its lap. Not a bird sang—the *cicale* were silent as yet. It was for this ecstatic moment of the first vision of her valley that Bron always hurried up the mountain path. To-day she stood and breathed the exquisite beauty, letting her eyes wander from sky and sea to rocky peaks, and last, always last, the valley and the garden. Then she stared.

Someone was there. Someone like a large fungus sitting among her tulips. Her mood changed, and she hurried down to the gate of the garden, which was locked. The creature must have climbed the wall. It was a woman, who rose in embarrassment when she saw Bron.

" Do you know you are trespassing?" asked Bron with some indignation.

" Yes, I'm afraid I do," said the other disarmingly. " But it didn't seem possible that anyone could be within miles of me, and I couldn't resist climbing over. I am so sorry. I will go at once. Please forgive me. May I say that I have never seen anything so beautiful as your garden?"

Bron melted at once.

" If you really think that, please stay a little longer. I will get some cushions from the *casetta* and we will sit on the wall."

She was eyeing with some curiosity this young woman in the hideous mud-coloured clothes. How dared she wear such things in Spiaggia? She was between twenty-five and thirty, a tall drooping creature with large hysterical blue eyes, a sallow face, and an abundance of colourless hair arranged untidily about her ears. She was a perfect example of the unloved spinster. She had come to Spiaggia, she said, because she had seen a picture of it in a paper four years ago. She had made up her mind to visit it if she ever went anywhere. Her small income was not enough to live on, but by working she had saved enough, and had taken a month's holiday.

" What from?"

" I work for the Charity Society and since my mother died I live at a residential club for professional girls."

" You mean it's a holiday from both?"

She smiled. Certainly life wasn't very exciting, but she was less lonely living in the club. No, she was not at all disappointed in Spiaggia. She had never imagined anything so lovely.

" It makes you feel quite a different being," she said.

" It does indeed. Are you alone?"

" Quite."

" No friends here?"

" I talk to some old ladies and a clergyman who are staying at my little hotel on the Marina. That's all." Her thin claw-like hands were playing with the tulips Bron had given her; her narrow shoulders were hunched.

" No men to speak of?"

" No. I never meet any men—to speak of."

Bron thought of the letter she had had this morning from a woman friend;

> " *As for the Mediterranean—did it get me? My dear Bron, it got me to such an extent that I cannot live in Italy alone—it's not possible. No, one needs a man in Italy. Climatically, it is impossible for spinsters. Like the rose, the Mediterranean has very sharp thorns. Basta!*"

Here was a type not interesting in itself, but in its reaction to the lure of Spiaggia. Would this spinster too be driven forth by mutinous repressions?

Meanwhile, it was time for her to go. The tulips must be enjoyed alone.

" Come to tea at my villa to-morrow," suggested Bron.

She explained where it was.

" *That* villa? Why, then you must be—are you Mrs. Edge?"

" Does it frighten you?"

" No—*no*. Only, it interests me tremendously."

" Will you come?"

" Of *course*. Do you really mean it?"

Bron laughed and nodded. The drab figure sheered off, but came back again.

" I forgot to tell you my name. It is Mabel Ebony."

" How nice," said Bron.

Next day Bron was on her terrace at tea-time, and saw Miss Mabel Ebony plunging along the narrow path which led to the villa, nearly as lonely as the mountain garden, but not so remote. She seemed to be in a hurry. When she was announced by Maria (who glanced at her as much as to say "Well, whatever the Signora does is right, but this is not *my* style ") it was evident that she was agitated.

" Please forgive me if I seem bothered. I ought not to have come, but I want your advice—at least, I should say, I want to see you before I leave. I am going to-morrow."

" What! going to-morrow? You said you were here for three weeks."

" Yes, yes, I was. But I must go. I have had an experience. Dreadful. I don't know what to do. Oh yes, I must go to-morrow. There's no doubt about it."

" Can you tell me what has happened to make you change your mind?" Bron was burning with curiosity.

The globe-like eyes were feverishly bright.

" Well, when I left you yesterday I didn't go home, but wandered about the mountain till dusk, and then went to the town and bought a few things before I started to walk down to the Marina. By that time it was quite dark." She gulped. " I hadn't been walking long down the steps when I realised that I was being followed. He was just about three yards behind me all the way down the first stretch—"

" How do you know he was following you? If he happened to be walking behind you—"

" He was talking to me. I don't know what it was, most of it, though he said a few words in English, but it was all *whispered*—and terrifying." The colour rushed up and down her neck. " Of course I took no notice of him but hurried on. Then when I got to where the steps cross the road and the road makes a curve and joins the steps again, I thought I'd got rid of him, for he didn't follow me. But when I got to the road again, there he was waiting for me, facing the steps! He must have run round quickly to get in front of me."

" Then what happened?" asked Bron as the narrator seemed to collapse.

" Then he offered to carry my string bag—"

" String bag!" thought Bron. " How like you."

" And walked beside me all the way to the hotel."

" Did you let him carry your string bag?"

" What could I do? I was much too frightened to refuse. But wasn't it awful! Have you ever had such an experience?"

" Hum, well, not exactly the same perhaps. But it's not uncommon, especially here. There are lots of queer people about who don't mind being followed as much as you do."

" I could never stay here alone after that, could I!"

" Of course not, if you feel like that about it."

" You do advise me to leave, don't you?"

" Certainly. Is that all you have to tell me?"

" Nearly. It was queer though, when he was eating his *maccheroni*—"

" *What*?"

" Oh, didn't I tell you? He said he was hungry, and when he asked me to give him some food I didn't dare to refuse. So I

took him into the hotel and gave him something to eat. I didn't eat with him, of course. But as I was saying, it was queer, because the landlady of the hotel knows him quite well. She told me he was a boatman—rather a bad lot, I think."

"What's he like? Perhaps I know him."

"I hardly looked at him. But he's young, and I suppose good-looking in a dark Italian sort of way—big brown eyes and very white teeth. But he didn't make much impression, except that in the dark he was a frightening menacing figure. There was no one about. How was I to know he wasn't going to murder me?"

"Or worse," suggested Bron, simply to see the sallow face crimson.

"Oh, Mrs. Edge!" She quivered. "Wasn't it terrifying, though! I shall never forget it. The darkness, and not knowing what he was saying, and the feeling that at any moment he might—touch me. He did bump into me once when he was carrying my bag and I wasn't sure whether he did it on purpose. Then as he gave me my bag at the hotel he touched my hand, but that might have been an accident too. What do you think?"

"I should say that if he bumped into you *and* touched your hand it was not an accident."

"I'm dreadfully afraid it wasn't. What *could* he have meant by such behaviour? I'm sure no Englishman would do such a thing."

"No, I'm quite sure he wouldn't," agreed Bron, faintly smiling.

Two spots of crimson had settled permanently in Miss Ebony's cheeks.

"I know you must think it exaggerated to take it so seriously—" There was too much accent on the "you."

"Why should *I*?"

"Oh, because you have—you must—" she faltered.

"I've had so much experience, you mean? Probably, however, I haven't had quite as much as you have been led to believe."

"Oh, forgive me! How tactless I am. But what I meant was—you must have—I mean—Oh please believe I don't believe everything I hear."

"I would love to know what you have heard," thought Bron.

Spiaggia gossip! It was stupendous—on the grand scale. A Tower of Babel, Gothic in tendency, but richly decorated with rococo improvisations of Latin origin.

" So you're going to-morrow."

" Yes, by the early boat. He has threatened to come to the hotel to-night with some corals, but I certainly shan't see him."

" No, I certainly shouldn't. Now come and see my cliff garden, which is nearly as good as the mountain one."

Miss Ebony was able to give a fluttering attention to the wild beauty of the garden in a cleft of the sheer cliff and the huge limestone column that dominated it, shedding a long shadow over the house. When she said good-bye there were tears in her eyes.

" It has all been so wonderful," she said fervently. " I do hate going."

" Safer to go," smiled Bron.

" Oh yes, there's no doubt about that."

Bron sniffed a bit of rosemary when she had seen Miss Ebony through the gate. " Poor outraged virgin," she sighed. A pity she was leaving. But she was probably too deeply rooted in respectability to yield even to the syren call of Spiaggia. On behalf of all starved females Bron invoked that god whose symbol towered with such majesty above the garden, and then she forgot Miss Mabel Ebony.

Three weeks later Bron went down to the Marina. It was a grey and primrose morning. The sea, as if to show it need not always be blue to be attractive, had become quicksilver and still as a lake. The air was just touched with scirocco—enough to make one pleasantly languid. Wistaria hung from old gates and terraces, filling the air with sudden perfume, as though a goddess had brushed by on her way to some celestial tryst.

A line of girls passed, moving like young leopards, barefooted, each one as she swung by under her load saluting with a smile from bright wanton eyes.

" Everything that happens here, everything one sees, is an event. There is nothing without significance. That little cab trailing up the hill, with its driver half asleep inside it has intense individuality. Every day is a different flower. Yesterday was a peony; to-day is a columbine. How wonderful it all is. One never gets used to it, thank God. If one did one wouldn't deserve to live here."

The delicious langour of the day demanded a Vermouth, and from a terrace over the Marina Bron sat watching the movement of the little port. Sea and sky met in a lavender stillness, and

orange boats were floating like gold-fish in a bowl. Maria had said, as she bade Bron "*buona passeggiata*," that the sun was sick. "*Il sole è ammalato.*" She considered it was sick if it was not blazing in a cloudless sky.

From one of the small houses on the Marina a bright figure emerged—a girl with two fat pigtails, bareheaded, barelegged, brown necked. She wore a home-made but expressive little frock of the gay cretonne Bron would have bought at the Piazza shop if there had not been so much of it. Probably one of the Swedish party that was so talked about, fair young men and women who, when they were not swimming or doing incredible gymnastics on the beach, were rooted like brilliant anemones to the rocks, sunbathing.

"*Ecco la Signorina inglese!*" remarked the waiter, pouring out another glass of Vermouth. "She occupies the *casetta* of our *padrone*. They say she has taken it for a year."

"English?" Bron said, and looked again at the girl who was approaching up the road.

"Yes, English. Very rich, they say, and chooses to be at Spiaggia for the rest of her life. She bathes—not on the Marina. She prefers to go to distant beaches. My cousin Luigino is her *marinaio*. She has engaged him for all the season. A simpatica signorina, he says, but a little mad, like all the English, if you will excuse me."

It was Mabel Ebony, transformed, transmuted, blooming like a rose. She would wear pigtails and dress strangely for the rest of her life and be perfectly happy. And all because an impudent fisherman followed her home one night.

"*Ecco* Luigino! He is preparing the boat."

Untidy black curls, flashing eyes, mahogany skin, and a rich tenor voice. Blithely he sang as he threw the cushions and bathing things into the boat:

Vieni sul mar!
Vieni a vogar
Sentirai l'ebbrezza
del tuo marinar!

to the tune of *Two Lovely Black Eyes*.

"At any rate I am not responsible for this," thought Bron. "I did advise her to go home."

She forgot the invocation to that god whose symbol towered with such majesty above the garden.

Phyllis Megroz

WORLD-ESCAPE

IN that soft hour before the day,
When the cool sky is luminous and gray,
Shall the sad wanderers from earthly things,
Broken and bleeding
From battering at a gate of pearl unheeding—
Fold up their wings
And creep into the arms of that still goddess
Who holds all solitude in her embrace,
She shall catch up their fevered, stumbling bodies
And drift her dream-filled hair across each face.

Dreams, dreams—and each shall be a god alone,
A carven god that pipes upon a hill,
Whose breast is marble, and whose heart is stone,
On whose pale feet the water-crystals spill,
And to whose rock the world is lashed in chain,
A mist of silence hugs its crying lips,
Across its questing eyes a shadow slips—
The captive world that shall not stir again.

Dreams, dreams—for still I see the burning brow,
The hands uplifted of the postulant,
Whose sobbing " Give " and " Give " pierce through me now,
The mouth half-smiling as I half-recant—
I'll fly, heed not sly pity, twist, elude,
Break down the tangles of the living fence,
And in thy arms, who holdest solitude,
Through sleep, I'll hear the clamorous beast go hence.

Phyllis Megroz

SWAY LOW, SWEET CHARIOT

SWAY low, sweet chariot,
Soft moon, swing low,
All, all dissolves in the faint-silvered darkness.
The world I know
Drifts as a leaf, spins idly on the eddy
Among a thousand stars
That fold their pointed petals in the silence
Like sleeping nenuphars.
O cease to trouble,
The sharp sword smites not through impalpable shade,
The steel bends double
Before thy still breast meets its seeking blade.
For thou art dead—body and spirit wholly,
Soft moon, swing low,
Sway low, sweet chariot, slowly, slowly, slowly—
Bid Gabriel go,
And fill the air with all his golden thunder,
That if they will,
The slumberers may burst their shrouds asunder,
And skyward spill
Wild praises for renewal,
Caught up again in tumult of rebirth—
But Death's thy jewel,
The touchstone turning soul to common earth,
The mouth that speaks not and the ear unheeding—
O better so
Than the strong cry, the flame, the pale brow bleeding—
Sway low, sweet chariot, soft moon, swing low.

F. T. Powys

THE RIVAL PASTORS

IT is always a dangerous thing to allow churches to be built too near to each other, for, like old Devon bulls in the same field, they do not often agree. Whenever two churches are but a mile apart their bells are sure to clang angrily and their pastors are as prone to fight, and to be as jealous of one another, as two Dartmoor stags.

Everyone knows that, in political matters, those who hold nearly the same opinions quarrel over them the most, and though High and Low Church ministers are both Catholic Christians, yet either would address themselves more politely to an atheist or Papist than to each other.

It is certainly fortunate for the quiet and peace of the modest layman that each church, however near, is set in its own parish for, if two churches—so near as Shelton and Maids Madder—had no legal boundary there would be sure to be murder.

The towers of these two churches were in full view of one another and looked resentful, and their respective ministers were certainly not behindhand in the battle of tongues.

Mr. Hayhoe of Maids Madder belonged to the evangelical persuasion—a persuasion that is, alas! scarce enough in these forward times, when faith hides in the hollow trees and when so many have gone over to the scarlet lady of Rome. Mr. Hayhoe was all the more bitter in heart for being left so lonely.

Mr. Dirdoe of Shelton, though wearing the same kind of cloth —the deepest black that could be purchased for money—held views that Mr. Hayhoe abhorred. Mr. Dirdoe believed in ritualism and held that any pastor who was too lazy to turn to the East when the creed was being said must be little less than a man of Belial.

Mr. Hayhoe was at heart and in conversation a Calvinist, Mr. Dirdoe, a disciple of Dr. Keble. Mr. Hayhoe was married, Mr. Dirdoe was a single man. Each gentleman kept to his own parish, and so terrified his people with threats of everlasting

damnation if they entered the church of his rival that no one either in Shelton or Maids Madder, ever thought of doing so—except Lily Topp.

Whether it was the devil's doing or no, it is not possible to tell, but unfortunately the parish boundary that divided Maids Madder from Shelton, went through the middle of Daisy Cottage which was owned by John Topp, though this cottage was but a hundred yards from Maids Madder Church.

When John Topp sat down at his table for tea he took up the knife and cut the loaf of bread in Shelton, and Mrs. Topp, when she filled his cup was in Maids Madder, while Lily Topp more often than not had a foot in both the parishes.

" Maiden," Mr. Topp would observe with a great laugh, " be in two places at once."

When Mr. Hayhoe came home from the evening service, Mrs. Hayhoe would anxiously watch her husband, who was in the habit because his own beard was so rough, of calling her a poor weak woman. If Mr. Hayhoe looked sadly at the cold pork that his wife had provided for supper, Mrs. Hayhoe knew that Lily Topp had not been in her pew beside her mother, and so must have committed the crime of visiting Shelton Church, where even incense was used for evensong.

Mr. Hayhoe preached in a black gown—that wasn't a new one—he was short and thick-set, but with the mildest eyes that any troubled sinner could wish to see. Though he used rough words in his sermons, his acts were the kindest, " but with damnation knocking at one's door," he would say, " 'tis best to speak plain."

Mr. Dirdoe, on the other hand, was thin and saintly and extremely nice in all that he did or said. His eyes were kind, too, though melancholy, his fingers were long and his hands as white as a maid's. He too, as well as Mr. Hayhoe, would be sure to notice whether Lily Topp visited Shelton Church, where the child would sit in a pew in front of the boys, who would throw nuts at her.

As is often the case with men whose thoughts ever dwell in the imagination and seek both their delight and sorrow in religion, neither of the rival pastors ever paid the slightest heed to the earthly or carnal affairs of their people. These pastors were only concerned with the souls of their flocks, and each believed that the soul of Lily Topp was in jeopardy.

No doctor is more courteous in matters of etiquette than a country minister, for to trespass upon another's preserves—even to hunt a soul—is considered a very dreadful crime. Mr. Dirdoe dared not call at Daisy Cottage, neither dared Mr. Hayhoe, for neither knew in which village they would find the occupants. But, alas! for Mr. Dirdoe, the manners and warmth of the church at Maids Madder and the fierce pulpit cries of Mr. Hayhoe had captured John Topp and his wife, Alice, who remained safe in the evangelical fold. Only Lily was the sometime wanderer.

In both the reverend gentlemen's minds there was the awful thought—" What if Lily should be damned?"

Just as Daisy Cottage was in the two parishes so also were John Topp's fields, for though they were both very little fields, one was in Maids Madder and one in Shelton. The fields were high up upon the down and when John was at plough he could be easily seen from the Rectory windows at Maids Madder or from the Shelton Vicarage garden.

Though so separate in ideas that each believed the other's doctrine to be most damnable and capable of leading any who listened to it to perdition, yet, besides possessing the same loving-kindness in his eyes, each of the ministers had the same favourite hymn. And they never sang it without thinking of Lily Topp, for the hymn was—" There were Ninety and nine." No pastors of religion could be more humble either than these two good men, though they never met one another for fear they might say too much. But neither, for one moment, would allow himself to think that the simple peasants under his charge were not quite as interested in matters of religion as he.

When two good men seek so lovingly to save a sinner one can easily conceive that the same idea might come to both at the same moment.

Mr. Dirdoe was an early riser and so was Mr. Hayhoe, and after breakfast each would walk in his parish, visit the sick, talk to any old hedger he might meet and then return to write his sermon. One summer morning, when all the fowls of the air were singing their matins, Mr. Dirdoe took a turn in his garden. No one, unless it were Mr. Hayhoe, had more honourable ideas than he. He would have thrust his right hand into the fire and burnt it to a stump sooner than have harmed any, by word, thought or deed. He believed as strongly as his rival in the

soundness of family life and would never think of addressing Lily Topp upon the subject of religion without asking her father's leave.

Mr. Dirdoe, as it happened that morning, looked up at the hills and saw John Topp at plough. Mr. Dirdoe knew every field in his parish, and John Topp was ploughing in Shelton.

Mr. Dirdoe returned to his house. A tramp was resting upon the doorstep and the pastor asked him politely if he would mind moving for one moment. The tramp moved sullenly and Mr. Dirdoe fetched his hat and began to climb the downs. As he climbed Mr. Dirdoe sang his favourite hymn. . . .

Although John Topp's horses were old, they were happy with their master, for John never hurried them, and when they had a mind to rest he permitted them. John liked the horses to stop when he was alone, but he never wished any one to notice that he was resting them for he always affirmed at home that his horses worked as fast as the best and, if they rested at all, it was because they broke the traces with their vigorous motion.

John heard the hymn. He saw Mr. Dirdoe approach him, and his horses stopped. John called out to them but they remained still. He gave the reins a shake but that did no good.

" Maybe 'e won't notice that they baint moving," said John eyeing the approaching minister with much concern, " but, allsame, 'tis best for I to give they horses their bait."—John had provided a nosebag for each horse, though for himself he had taken nothing. He now permitted them to eat.

Mr. Dirdoe was not a man, as some are, who is afraid to name the master in whose employment he lived.

" I ask," he said, " in the name of God, to have a word with you, John."

But John shook his head.

" Thik baint a name to speak in these fields," he said.

" And why?" asked Mr. Dirdoe.

" Because they horses baint churchgoers," replied John.

" I wish to ask you," said Mr. Dirdoe, without heeding John's reply, " if I may speak of the Eucharist, auricular confession and the penitentiary to your daughter, Lily."

John Topp laughed loudly.

" Oh!" he said, " thee won't catch our Lil wi' they sprats!"

" You give me permission to try," enquired Mr. Dirdoe eagerly.

" Thee may try what thee like," replied John, " but our Lil baint born yesterday, and that I do know."

Mr. Dirdoe strode down the hill. In his mind's eye he saw Lily Topp. A young creature, with round legs, running like a fawn, whose black eyes were merry, and whose cheeks might have been jealous of her lips that were like cherries, had not they themselves resembled rosy apples. That was but the carnal child of the flesh. Mr. Dirdoe saw her soul, too—a white virgin pearl hidden in her heart. . . .

Mr. John Topp had been ploughing the last furrow in his Shelton field when Mr. Dirdoe visited him, and upon the very next day he commenced to plough his other field, that was situated in Maids Madder. He had not been there but half an hour—and had already rested his horses four times, and was driving away his own troubles with a whiff of tobacco, at one end of the field—when he saw Mr. Hayhoe approaching from the direction of Maids Madder Rectory.

Mr. Hayhoe, who regarded the field a little contemptuously because it was not a page of the scriptures, at once began to speak of salvation by faith, how few were predestined to be saved and how many were to be damned. " And if," said Mr. Hayhoe, raising his voice so that even one of John's horses raised its head, " Lily continues to go to Shelton Church she will be damned, too."

" No one baint damned," said Mr. Topp, " for doing what they be minded, and she who do bide most times in two parishes do like to visit two churches."

" But there is only one God," replied Mr. Hayhoe.

" So folk do say," replied Mr. Topp calmly.

" And Him only shalt thou serve," said Mr. Hayhoe.

" 'Twould insult our Lil to tell she so," answered Mr. Topp, " for she do say she'll marry a squire, and do go to Shelton Church to see what folk do wear at weddings."

" You must permit me to reason with her," pleaded Mr. Hayhoe. " Would you allow your daughter to call at the Rectory every Saturday afternoon at four o'clock?"

" Which door be she to knock at?" enquired Mr. Topp.

" The front door," replied Mr. Hayhoe, " and I will open it myself."

John Topp looked at the minister a little suspiciously.

" Our Lil baint one who do fancy any nonsense," he said.

" Then she cannot like sacerdotalism," observed Mr. Hayhoe gladly.

" No, she don't," said Mr. Topp. " She don't like none of they matters, for she be a good maid. . . ."

If the poor weak woman, who had married Mr. Hayhoe because he came as a missioner to her father's village, had one idea left of her own, it was about her sofa covers. These she liked to keep clean. But when she heard that her husband had invited Lily Topp to have a talk with him on Saturday afternoons she was sure that he would invite Lily to sit upon the study sofa.

" And her clothes are so dirty," Mrs. Hayhoe said with a sigh.

" If she goes to Hell they will be dirtier," remarked Mr. Hayhoe.

Mrs. Hayhoe had only just time to take away the cushion that she feared Lily might lean her head upon, when a quick knock came at the front door, and a young child with a skipping-rope in her hand and a merry look in her eyes was invited to enter by Mr. Hayhoe and conducted to his study.

Had Lily regarded anything else but the furniture she might have been a little alarmed at the extreme deference shown to her by the pastor who, indeed, treated every man, woman and child with the same polite consideration, for he saw them all—sinners though all of them were—as children of God. Mr. Hayhoe handed Lily, with a bow, to the sofa.

" You must pardon me," he said, " for taking you from your pastimes, but my excuse and warrant is that you have a soul to be saved."

" Oh, I wasn't doing nothing important," replied Lily. " I was only skipping alone. I weren't playing wi' Tommy."

" Lily," said Mr. Hayhoe, " I long to call you a child of grace and to keep you in our fold."

" 'Taint nor child of grace that our Daddy do call I, nor Tommy neither," replied Lily, " for 'tis little Devil wi' both one and t'other."

" Lily," said Mr. Hayhoe, " do not listen to vain talkers who set snares for your feet."

" Why," exclaimed Lily, jumping up with a laugh and skipping across the room, " that's just what Mr. Dirdoe do say!"

" I hope you do not listen to him," said Mr. Hayhoe, turning a little pale.

" Oh, no," replied Lily. " I don't take no notice of they men."

" But you will listen to me, Lily?"

" If thee do talk nice," answered Lily.

" Mr. Dirdoe promised you heaven, I suppose," enquired Mr. Hayhoe sadly, " if you curtseyed to the Altar?"

" He promised I a packet of bullseyes," laughed Lily.

" I will give you two packets if you stay with us," said Mr. Hayhoe.

Lily laughed, kicked up her heels in the air and brought them down upon the sofa cover. The poor weak woman opened the study door. . . .

Though Mr. Dirdoe hadn't succeeded in catching Lily Topp when he spoke to her in the lane before she visited Mr. Hayhoe, yet he did not despair of her. Every Saturday afternoon, as soon as she had eaten her dinner, Lily would skip along the Shelton road to meet him, and he would first explain and then condemn the evangelical dogma, while Lily waited patiently and watched the birds in the sky. Presently Mr. Dirdoe would give her, as a reward for her patient listening, a packet of sweets.

Never in his life before had Mr. Dirdoe been so happy, and he secretly began to dread the day when Lily would no more divide her favours between Maids Madder Church and Shelton but come entirely to Shelton, for then he would only think it proper to preach to her from the pulpit. But all means now appeared to be right in his eyes for so good an end, and soon it became a common thing to see Mr. Dirdoe on Saturday afternoons skipping himself—his heels up, his coat-tails flying—or else holding one end of a rope while Tommy held the other as Lily skipped.

Sometimes Lily met Mr. Dirdoe alone, for Tommy would often prefer to go with the other boys to stone the seagulls upon the cliffs, and then Mr. Dirdoe would sit beside Lily upon a log of wood in the Shelton Lane, hold her hand in his and tell her a number of exciting stories all about what happened to him when he was a child. Now and again Lily, as well as Tommy, had occupations at Madder that amused her more than listening to Mr. Dirdoe's stories, and then Mr. Dirdoe would sit upon the log and wait for her in vain, looking so sad and melancholy that everyone who saw him there laughed loudly.

One Saturday, Lily, who had taken a little longer than usual over her dinner—for she had the bones of a fresh herring to pick at with her fingers—found Mr. Dirdoe with his face hidden in his hands, looking so disconsolate that she felt pity for him.

" Our Dad do say," remarked Lily, " that thee'd be happier if 'ee had a young girl to mind out to, an' 'tis a pity I baint a little older to be thee's bride."

" I am seeking you, Lily, as a bride for God," replied Mr. Dirdoe.

" Be God very old?" asked Lily.

" He is immortal," answered Mr. Dirdoe.

" Our Dad do say," continued Lily, " that thee mid kiss me if thee's mouth do itch, for 'taint worth while to destroy theeself for want of a kiss."

Mr. Dirdoe sat Lily beside him and stroked her hand.

" I am seeking your soul," he said, " so that I may give it, blameless, to the angels."

" Why, that's just what Mr. Hayhoe do say," laughed Lily.

After Lily Topp had been for an hour or two with Mr. Dirdoe she would, as a rule, visit Mr. Hayhoe at Madder Rectory, where he had been wont to condemn strongly all ceremonial. While he talked he permitted Lily to pull out the drawers of a cabinet that was in the study and lay their contents upon the sofa cover. This Lily was pleased enough to do, for, in each drawer, there were a number of curious things—shells and coins, beads and amber charms—that had all been collected by Mr. Hayhoe's great grandmother.

Seeing her so happy with these toys, Mr. Hayhoe would leave his talk and tell her the same tales that his grandmother had told him about all her travels. They would both be as happy as possible, until the poor weak woman would knock at the door and say that it was high time that Lily went home.

" 'Tis a pity old women be so interfering," Lily would observe, as she helped Mr. Hayhoe to put back the drawers, " for when 'taint their sofa covers, 'tis their chairs they do think of—and 'taint we two who be crabbed " . . . .

Since Ben Jonson wrote these pretty lines—

> " Weep with me, all you that read
> This little story;
> And know, for whom a tear you shed
> Death's self is sorry."

some of those whose years have numbered scarce thirteen, finish all too early their happy play in the daytime sun, and so a day arrived when Mr. Dirdoe sat waiting sadly and no Lily came. A car, that he knew to be the doctor's, went by him towards Madder, though Mr. Dirdoe did not heed it.

Mr. Dirdoe had decided to make one final effort that afternoon to save Lily Topp from the error of her Madder ways. He would not meet her again, for the people of Shelton were already beginning to talk about him and to say horrid things.

Mr. Dirdoe, upon one of his short holidays, had seen in a jeweller's window at Weyminster a golden chain with a crucifix attached. This he had purchased as a gift for Lily, hoping that with this little cross upon her bosom, she would always wish to worship before the more splendid one upon the Shelton Altar.

Mr. Dirdoe waited. The same car that had passed him, going to Madder, returned again. The doctor's bald head was inside.

Mr. Dirdoe wondered what could have happened to Lily. Perhaps, he thought, " Mr. Hayhoe has beguiled her earlier than usual to Madder Rectory, in order to read Spurgeon's Sermons."

Mr. Dirdoe jumped up excitedly; a sudden idea came to him. He would go and take the lamb out of the very jaws of the lion.

Madder was unusually silent, as if a cloud of gloom was fallen upon it, when Mr. Dirdoe walked boldly through the village on his way to the Rectory. As he walked he overtook the Madder sexton, Mr. Endor, whom he knew by sight. He walked with him, though neither of the two spoke one word, as far as the churchyard gates.

For all the righteous zeal that burnt in Mr. Dirdoe's heart, his hand trembled when he knocked at the Rectory door. The door was opened by the poor weak woman who looked extremely surprised to see the visitor. Mrs. Hayhoe held in her hand a new sofa-cover. She conducted Mr. Dirdoe at once to the study.

During his walk Mr. Dirdoe had prepared a torrent of words that he felt must totally destroy all that Martin Luther or Jack Calvin had ever put into Mr. Hayhoe's head, and after refuting his rival he would offer his gift to Lily and lead her away to the right fold.

But all Mr. Dirdoe's wonderful arguments were forgotten when he saw his rival, for Mr. Hayhoe, with his arms thrown out before him and his head resting upon the great Bible, was weeping bitterly.

He recovered himself as Mr. Dirdoe entered and, grasping the rival pastor's hand, nodded to a picture upon the wall that showed the lost lamb being carried to its fold in the loving arms of the good shepherd.

The church bell tolled.

The rival pastors, weeping together, embraced one another.

Alice Ritchie

A LOVE STORY FOR THE PENSION

THE nude bronze lady on the mantel piece hammered on her gong eight times as the five English people who lived in the Pension came out of dinner. They were very regular. The same time usually found them in the same clothes in the same place. Mr. Whiteley held aside the curtain which divided the salon that was theirs by unwritten law from the common apartment of trippers and foreigners. In trailed the glory of Miss Wood, wearing the blue kimono she had bought in England three Leaves ago; on followed Mrs. Whiteley, dark and dashing in her yellow dress with the train. Miss Carter had been kept late at the Office and was still just navy blue coat and skirt, cut short to show her neat grey silk ankles. Mr. Culpeper came last and tried to laugh—but his embarrassment turned it into a sort of snort—to show Mr. Whiteley he appreciated the absurdity of daring to profit by the held up curtain.

" Ring, Bliss," commanded Miss Wood, sinking into a corner of the little red sofa.

" Order a cognac for me, with the coffee," desired Mrs. Whiteley, sinking into the other corner. That disposed of the comfortable seats. The yellow and blue skirts flowed over each other.

Miss Carter sat on the piano stool facing the room, her doting eyes on Mr. Whiteley who stood by the mantel piece holding the nude lady's legs.

" Is it Gilbert and Sullivan to-night, Bliss, or the Beggar's Opera?" she asked. Gilbert and Sullivan was the piano, the Beggar's Opera was the gramophone. Mr. Culpeper started forward to indicate readiness to fetch the records.

" Neither, yet," said Mr. Whiteley tersely. Mr. Culpeper glanced furtively at the red velvet armchair, and sat down on the cane-bottomed one near the door.

" That cheese soufflé was good," said Miss Wood.

" Greedy devil!" laughed Mr. Whiteley, letting himself down into the red armchair.

" Well, thank God, I am greedy," retorted Miss Wood.

" Greed is one of Joy's main charms," said Miss Carter gently.

" Not so expensive as thirst."

They lit cigarettes. Mr. Whiteley stretched his legs. The coffee came.

" Priceless in the Office to-day," said Miss Wood. " You know that woman, Lesmines. The damned fool is always trying to make trouble about me. It's so silly. I don't mind for myself; I know my works all right, but I hate to see a woman giving herself away so hopelessly. Mossitch, you know the nice little Russian from the Printing Section, came up for something, and of course he crossed over to speak to me. He always does. We were in the middle of talking, mind you, when Lesmines suddenly shouts out, ' Mees Wood, do you remember you had a telephone call for a document?' ' Thank you, Mademoiselle,' I said, ' I know, and I should have done it ten minutes ago, if I had been able to think through the row you were making with your friend on the 'phone.' Of course, she was completely squashed. But Mossitch noticed, I could see. I can't imagine what he thought of her."

" Is Mossitch that very young boy with black hair?" asked Miss Carter.

" He isn't so frightfully young," said Miss Wood, " I think he said he was twenty-one. He isn't a baby at all, in his ways."

" My dear girl, you can't expect to find manners in a place like the Office, full of every kind of Dago under the sun," said Mr. Whiteley.

" I often wonder why we stay," said Miss Wood. " We've got a decent country to live in, and yet we sign ourselves into exile in this beastly hole."

" Isn't it because of the pay?" hazarded Mr. Culpeper.

" Do you know, I believe I'll have a brandy," said Mr. Whiteley, " press that bell near you, Culpeper."

" You never get actually drunk do you, Bliss?" asked Miss Carter.

" Not nowadays," said Mr. Whiteley beaming, " I can't. If you have enough bee-stings, you get so you never feel them."

" They called him Boozing Bill at Oxford," said Mrs. Whiteley, both pride and resentment in her voice.

" Oh, the dear old days!" Mr. Whiteley kissed his hand.

" I wonder if I'd have liked you, if we had met then," said Miss Wood.

" Oh, I think so," said Mr. Whiteley, drinking brandy. Their eyes met meaningfully. Mrs. Whiteley shifted a little on the sofa.

" I wonder where Margery is," said Miss Carter, " I didn't know whether to tell them to keep her dinner. Its the day she goes up to the University after the Office for her French lesson, but she never is late."

" She surely can't have picked up a man?" suggested Miss Wood.

" My dear!"

" Oh no, I don't think she is that kind of girl. Her sex instincts are not highly developed," said Mr. Whiteley with the air of one who has purposely withheld the benefit of his virility.

" Well, I don't know, she isn't a girl who is used to much attention, and, what I mean is, she would fall a very easy prey—"

" She didn't like—" said Mrs. Whiteley, tipping her head towards the curtain.

" Mavridis! Hang it all the girl is English. Naturally she wanted us to protect her from him—nasty Greek blighter."

" I think she is settling down very nicely," said Miss Carter. " She was terribly home-sick at first."

" I believe she still is," said Mr. Culpeper.

" Well, we all are," claimed Miss Wood, " I'm sure I—"

" But she is so young," said Mr. Culpeper.

" I think her looks have gone off terribly," remarked Mrs. Whiteley, " Just at first, I thought her rather pretty, if you like that pale style, but she seems to have got so haggard and colourless."

" A nice girl enough," said Mr. Whiteley tolerantly.

" She doesn't attract much attention at the Office," said Miss Wood, " I'm rather disappointed. I thought some one would have the sense to admire her."

The curtain was drawn a little back, and the yellow handsome face of Mr. Mavridis peeped round; his big black eyes scanned the room. " Apology," he said, smiling, and vanished.

" The cheek!" breathed Miss Wood.

" Hush, he understands English."

" I don't care. What right has a dirty Dago—"

" Oh my dear!"

" Well, I'm sick of the lot of them," Miss Wood's voice mounted, " that woman Lesmines—"

Mr. Culpeper rose. He knew by infallible signs that the geniality of the evening was evaporating. When the conversation wound back to its starting point, it always meant that the comfort born of warmth and dinner was ceasing to suffice, and, in a moment, one might be precipitated into the most unexpected and shattering battle.

" Who says Polly?" he asked, after clearing his throat, and bravely crossed to the gramophone. But before the first squeal, so well-known to them, had saved another evening, the door opened and Margery Smith entered, glowing and bare-headed.

" What a fug!" she cried gaily. " Its lovely out, fine and fresh as can be!"

" Have you had dinner?" asked Miss Carter.

" Where have you been?" asked Miss Wood.

" Yes, thank you. We were so late in getting out, and one of the students, the only other English, asked me to have dinner with him at a restaurant. Then we went up to the top of the Lake to see the baby swans. They are lovely. I'd never seen them before, teeny, teeny things, quite black. And then we walked round the old buildings behind the University; there's a long paved terrace with high hedges and trees. I didn't ever think there was anything so sweet in Geneva. You might be anywhere."

" You might," said Mr. Whiteley very solemnly.

" Do you want some coffee?" asked Mrs. Whiteley coldly.

" No, I don't think I do, thank you," answered Margery, stemmed in full spate, abashed, and fiddling with her gloves. " I think I'll go to bed. I am rather tired."

" What is the student's name?" asked Miss Wood, even as the door was closing.

" Dick Parndrik," said Margery eagerly, coming back reassured, " He says his uncle knew you at College, Mr. Whiteley; he was going to write to you about him, but he wasn't sure if you were still here. He is coming out soon, and they are going for a holiday together. The uncle must be awfully nice, he does everything for this Dick because his father is dead."

" Parndrik, Parndrik—Oh by Jove, yes—" said Mr. Whiteley.

" What is the nephew doing here?" demanded Miss Wood.

" Learning things, I think," answered Margery cheerfully.

She leant against the door, smiling at them vaguely, nursing her hat and gloves. They were silent, staring at her.

" Good-night," she said, disconcerted again, and shut the door.

" Good Heavens!"

" She said we were fuggy!"

" What a preposterous thing!" exclaimed Mr. Whiteley, breathing deeply. " Does she think she is going to be allowed to trail all over Geneva with this boy? He must be younger than she is! I must get hold of Parndrik's address."

" She would get it for you," said Mr. Culpeper.

" Oh Bliss, be careful. Do be sympathetic. Suppose she's flung out of the Pension!" wailed Miss Carter.

" Sympathetic be damned! I know my duty when I see it. Look at the girl's face and deny that she is recklessly in love, if you can."

" It would have to have been very sudden," ventured Mr. Culpeper.

" And sudden be damned!" cried Mr. Whiteley, whirling on him with extraordinary heat. " It's been going on, probably, for weeks. He made a fool of himself to-night, I expect, and kissed her. She's so excited, she had to let out something."

Miss Carter gasped.

" Baby swans!" ejaculated Miss Wood in her famous gibing voice. Her face was dark red, and she stared at Mr. Whiteley.

Mr. Culpeper shivered. He rose and advanced boldly to the gramophone.

. . . . . .

Margery Smith and young Dick Parndrik were walking back to her Pension.

" Oh oh," she laughed. " Let's go down to the Lake. I do love this wind."

" Our poor baby swans," she cried. " I'm anxious about what they will do when they are launched on this great bit of Lake. Do you think they will take the right turning when they come out of their houses under the Bridge? I should hate them to go *there*," she pointed to the reflected lights of the Kursaal. " But, after all, the mother must have warned them."

" You absurd girl! I'll tell you what, we'll come and toss

twigs at them, if we see them heading for the vain pleasures of the world."

"We must, it's our plain duty." She made a prim mouth in front of his shiny adoring eyes. "And now, we must go back."

They moved away in silence.

In the big courtyard in front of the Pension they paused dreamily.

"It's a very little walk from the Lake to here," remarked Margery, smiling and sighing and dropping his hand.

"Oh Margery," he cried, clumsily seizing her hand again. "I've got to go away!"

"Away!" she repeated, aghast.

He nodded. "You know I told you my uncle was coming out. Well, he has turned up, and we are going to tour all over the place for about a month. To-morrow we are going. I've been trying to get it out all evening."

"Only that! You terrified me. I thought you meant properly going, for ever. A month!" she bragged in her relief, "that's nothing."

"You may think so perhaps. I don't."

"But, silly," she teased, tipping her head back so that her hat brim should not hide his face from her, "It will be much better for you than for me, because you will be seeing new things, while I—"

"No," he interrupted, his heavy boyish face scowling. "You don't understand. You are absolutely frivolous, Margery."

"Oh poor Margery!" she murmured.

"You make fun of everything. You don't understand. I'm going." He turned abruptly and walked out of the courtyard, down the road.

Margery stood still a moment.

"All right," she said aloud, "Go then." A second after, she ran out and called "Dick, Dick!" after him. But he would not turn round, and other people did, so she had to come back.

"Two minutes," she told herself in the Lift, "to get all right to face them. Hush, you fool! You know he often gets offended just like that. He will write when he goes in to-night."

"I suppose he has taken her out to dinner again," said Miss Wood to Mr. Whiteley. They were alone.

"Well, he won't do it to-morrow!" chuckled Mr. Whiteley.

Miss Wood crossed to the window, looked out, and then angrily twitched down the blind.

" Of all the cheerless outlooks!" she exclaimed. " Kiss me, Bliss." Mr. Whiteley complied, but it did not seem to do much good. Her unhappy eyes wandered from the lady clock to the Traveller's Guide on the bamboo table, from the hanging light to the red sofa. " I believe I'll go on Leave," she said, gazing at it viciously, " I can always get a good time at home."

" Where are the others?" asked Mr. Whiteley.

" Carter is showing Elaine her new jumper. I don't know where Culpeper is."

" Oh Bliss," cried Miss Carter, hurrying in followed by Mrs. Whiteley. " Are you going to—"

Mr. Whiteley nodded.

" Bliss, please don't," she implored, sitting down recklessly on the sofa while Mrs. Whiteley remained standing. " I don't know, I haven't got a clear idea of principle like you and Joy, but I saw Margery and that boy to-night, going to dinner. I had a feeling when I saw them, I can't explain, but I just have to say, I had a horrible feeling" she pressed her damp hands together.

" My dear Carter, you're mad!"

" I must tell you," she insisted, almost wildly. " I felt I hated them. It is absurd, because I'm not young, but I think it was like jealousy. I do think there is something hateful for people not young and not always happy in seeing children so content, as if they had everything for nothing."

Miss Wood made a sound in her throat.

" You don't think," Miss Carter hurried on, not daring to meet the eyes that were fixed on her, " You don't think you could possibly have mistaken the impulse that is going to make you—because it would be awful; that feeling is very bad. No one should take action on it." She stopped, gasping.

Mr. Whiteley took a deep breath.

" You are quite right, Carter," he said, " It is a very bad feeling, so bad that if I were you, I think I should have kept it to myself. However, Joy and I will be able to bear your disapproval; we have our consciences."

" Oh," breathed Miss Carter, gazing at her idol, and she began to weep.

Poor Mr. Culpeper chose this moment to steal in. He had

got too deep into the room to turn back when he sensed the atmosphere.

" This place is like a railway terminus to-night," grumbled Mr. Whiteley, " people strolling in and out, and Margery still not back."

" Here's mine," said Miss Wood to Miss Carter, who was trying to dab her eyes with her fingers without taking off her glasses.

Somehow Mr. Culpeper got himself anchored to his cane-bottomed chair. Margery came in.

" How pale you are!" said Mrs. Whiteley.

" Am I?" exclaimed Margery, laying the back of her hand against her cheek in well-rendered surprise, " I feel particularly pink. I wonder if there is any coffee left?" She approached the table vivaciously and picked up the pot.

They watched the doomed girl, and waited for Mr. Whiteley.

" Margery," he began, " I saw Dick Parndrik's uncle to-day."

" Oh did you?"

" Yes. I wonder if you know that he is taking Dick away."

" Yes, he said something about it, a month's tour."

" Oh no, oh no," said Mr. Whiteley, slowly shaking his head.

" Why do you say that?" she asked with a nervous smile.

" Because he is taking Dick away altogether," said Mr. Whiteley still more slowly. Margery stared, holding the coffee pot. " He doesn't know, but at the end of the month he will go back to London, not Geneva. He will do what his uncle says, because you can't live on nothing at all, in either London or Geneva."

In front of their staring eyes her face puckered into the shocking grimace of a child about to cry. The grown-ups smiled nervously and sheepishly in involuntary response.

" Why?" she quavered.

" He is not satisfied with his progress. I may as well tell you frankly that I advised it, largely, Margery, on your account. Sit down, my dear girl. You can't conceive—"

" You advised it?" echoed Margery.

Mr. Whiteley bowed, but did not go on with his speech. He seemed suddenly rather at a loss.

Margery turned from him to Miss Wood, to Mrs. Whiteley, sweeping her glance over the demoralised Miss Carter and Mr.

Culpeper, as if she had just realised they were there, as if she had only now seen them.

" An American girl at the Office," she remarked, her voice cutting like an unsteady plough, " said a good thing to-day, she said, ' Natural flowers are all punk. I'll get me some artificial ones.' "

She dropped a lump of sugar in her cup, lifted it with a hand that spilled the half, crossed the room, raised the red curtain, and joined Mr. Mavridis.

Donald Stewart

JACK ASHORE

"JACK?"

"Well?"

"What are you thinking about, Jack?"

"Nothing."

"Go on, Jack. Tell us what you're thinking about. I bet its something nice. You're grinning and smiling all over your face."

The big blond sailor scratched his left calf with his right big toe and smiled lazily.

"I was thinking about you, duckie. All me thoughts are of you."

Queenie sniffed incredulously. That was a bit too much to swallow.

"I bet you weren't thinking about me at all, Jack, now were you? You were thinking about some other girl you used to know once, that one with the carroty hair at Portsmouth that you got married to in the end, eh?"

"You've got a strong imagination, kid. I never knew any girl with carroty hair at Portsmouth and I've never been spliced in my life."

"Oh—h. I bet you've been married ten times at the very least."

"Ten times! Here, steady on. What do you take me for? A blooming Hottentot."

"Well, you know what the old saying is, don't you? Jack's got a wife in every port, you know. And you can't tell me that you're any different to the rest of them. How many times have you been married, Jack, reelly and truly?"

"I'm not going to tell you. You'll have the police after me. I don't trust you women."

"Oh, go on, Jack. You know me, don't you. I shouldn't tell nobody."

"Oh yes, you would. You'd be round to the nearest police station before I could say Jack Robinson. I know you tarts all right."

" Oh, but you don't believe that reelly, Jack. You know I wouldn't play the dirty on a pal, don't you?"

" Well, I'm not so sure. You girls are so queer, always changing your minds, saying one thing and then going and doing something different. Never trust a skirt farther than you can see it, I say. It saves a lot of trouble."

" Oh, Jack, how unkind you are. You know that I would always behave straight with you—u—u."

" I'm not so sure."

" Jack! er—er."

" Here, shut that row, for Christ's sake. I was only kidding. Of course you wouldn't do me down. You're too good-hearted. You oughtn't to be in this trick at all. You ought to be in Heaven. Now, for the love of God, shut up."

" B—but you really don't think that I would tell the police, do you, Jack?"

" No, of course, I don't. Why should you? You wouldn't get anything out of it except a broken neck when I laid me fists on you. I've been married twice if you really want to know, once in Dundee and once in Sydney. I haven't seen neither of them for years and I don't want to neither. A couple of rotten bitches, they were—a bit like you Queenie, old girl."

The woman clasped her hands ecstatically over the sheets. The last remark of the sailor passed unchallenged.

" And you're really and truly a bigamist, Jack. Oh, how romantic!"

" Nothing very romantic about it. Bloody silly I call it. But I was just a bit of a lad then. I've got some sense now. You wouldn't catch me splicing up, not with the Queen of China now. Getting married is a mug's game."

" I agree with you there, Jack. I think it's ever so much nicer being single. I've refused offers from quite nice men in my time."

The sailor rolled over and smiled down at the fat little woman lying beside him.

" You're a something liar, aren't you. You, refusing husbands! That's a good one, that is."

" Oh, Jack you are rude this afternoon. I can't think what's come over you. And our last time together as well. You might try and be nice to me."

" Sorry, kiddo. You shouldn't take no notice of me when I

get chipping. 'Struth, it's hot though, ain't it. I shan't be sorry when I get out of this rat trap. A bit of blue water is what I fancy, blue water and half a gale and waves *that* high, eh, Queenie? A bit better than your stinking old Shadwell and your Portsmouth Hard, I'll lay."

" Oh, shut up, Jack." You give me the heart ache, you do. Why wasn't I born a man too?"

" A bloody fine man you'd have made! You're best where you are Queenie, so don't you go having any regrets. I say, a drink wouldn't do us any harm, would it? Get it out for us, Queenie, there's a good girl."

The woman sat up in bed and wiped the damp hair away from her eyes.

" You'll have to go and get some, Jack. I haven't got a drop. I can't afford to keep liquor here."

" Don't tell me lies, you bitch." Jack leaped nimbly out of bed and pulled savagely at trunks and cupboards and chests of drawers. Inside the wardrobe, half concealed amongst the clothes, stood two bottles of guinness, half a bottle of whisky, a soda syphon, and many empty bottles of various descriptions. The sailor gave an ah! of satisfaction and stood back, rubbing his hands together.

" I thought so—and a regular booze shop at that. I knew you were telling me lies, you cow. Now we're going to enjoy ourselves."

Queenie gave a smile of resignation and lay back amongst the pillows.

" As you're at it, dearie, give us a drop of stout. You'll find some glasses under the bed."

Jack poured out the two bottles of guinness and sat down on the cool linoleum to drink his portion. Queenie sat crosslegged on the bed and quaffed her's with crooked finger like a lady.

" There ain't many better drinks than guinness, are there? When it's hot, it cools you, and in the wintertime it puts some heart into you. I like guinness, myself." Jack tossed his empty glass across the carpet and rubbed his naked stomach thoughtfully.

" I like a drop of good champagne myself. But it's got to be good. I can tell at once if it's that cheap and nasty stuff. Champagne and oysters—my word! I remember once—"

" Oh, give it a rest!" Jack stood up and peered through the

venetian blind. Outside the sun beat down fiercely on slate roofs and stone pavements and on a narrow beach black with people. Beyond lay the sea, a tablecloth of bright blue velvet edged with crochet work. A yacht, tiny in the distance, drifted round the bend, turning the velvet into water. Boats moved about in the estuary and down by the quarys there was some activity, derricks twisting about, light engines shunting to and fro, tugs pulling and pushing—Jack dropped the slat and, turning, surveyed the woman sprawling across the bed. Suddenly she irritated him a little. She was so fat and red, just like lumps of raw meat thrown together into a heap. The cosmetics had been forgotten for two whole days now and her face was all pouches and purple marks. Great beads of perspiration stood out over her body, her hair was wet and matted—still, she wasn't so bad really. When you thought what bits there were knocking around, hardly able to stand up let alone do anything else—a bit on the sloppy side, she was, but goodnatured and homely. Jack liked that sort of girl, he hated having to dance round and look silly. That was all right for dukes and millionaires with plenty of time and dough, he liked something acquiescent and within easy reach. He sat down on the side of the bed and slapped her stomach affectionately, then stretched himself out beside her lazily.

It was too hot for anything—even love. Jack lit a cigarette and drew at it slowly, his eyes wandering heavily about the room. Over the mantelpiece hung a coloured picture of a girl with nothing on doing the splits. Jack felt sure that he had met that girl somewhere, though it hardly seemed possible, she probably being a swell dancer in Paris or New York. It might have been Rio perhaps— There was another girl over the mantelpiece, also with nothing on, the living spit and image of Gertie, poor old Gert that he used to take out on the Serps such a lot and that got drowned at Margate in the end, so her brother told him. Jack took another pull and his eyes travelled on to the huge wardrobe in the corner, Queenie's dirty pink underthings draped over a chair, his own shore suit, cut, apparently, from sheets of bright green iron, the empty guinness bottles, the gas bracket adorned with a large bow of blue ribbon, the bed on which he lay, lumpy with much use, his own toes, comparatively clean for once—

"Give us a cigarette, Jack." Silently Jack took the cigarettes and matches from under the pillow and tossed them

across the bed. Then, shutting his eyes, he continued to smoke lazily, the cigarette clasped inside his claw of a hand, the smoke shooting out from his mouth and nostrils in faint quick lines. He heard the prostitute strike three matches, curse feebly and toss about on the bed. Presently he felt her soft hand laid on his hairy chest. He moved restlessly but she kept it there.

"What are you thinking about, Jack?"

"You asked me that a quarter of an hour ago. Try something new."

"Well, I just had to say something, I couldn't stand it any longer. You're like a stuffed mummy lying there with your eyes shut and your mouth shut. You've got no manners, you haven't. Why can't you talk and be lively like a proper sailor."

"Proper sailor! Proper sailor! What the hell do you know about proper sailors?"

"Oh, you can sneer all right but I've known some of them in me time. Better sailors than you'll ever be, so there, Jack. Captains in the R.N. and first mates were nothing to me once."

"First mates to hell! Boys that had got a bit overheated through taking trippers for an hour's row on the briny, that's what you mean. Or fishermen and swell yachtsmen down for Bank Holiday without their yachts—I guess that's as far as you've got, my girl, and ever likely to get."

"I was friendly once with a man who'd been round the world seven times—more than you've ever been, I bet."

"What was he travelling in? Soap? Flash jewellery? Or what?"

"He wasn't travelling in nothing except his own pants. He was a sailor. He'd been a captain once but they'd put him down because of jealousy. He'd had one leg bitten clean off by a shark."

"That's nothing. Any fool can lose a leg that way. Had he ever had an octopus round him? Had he ever been marooned? Had he ever been shanghaied?"

"He'd been round the world seven times. He told me some wonderful stories."

"I bet he did. Pack of lies! Had he ever been to Rio?"

"Oh, yes, he talked about Rio a lot."

"And Hong Kong?"

"He was in hospital there once."

"And Toko? and Perim? and Penang? and—"

" Oh, I don't know. You confuse me so. Tell me about these places, Jack. What are they like? It must be wonderful to go abroad."

Jack smiled and carressed his woman softly.

" You're a funny kid, aren't you? Why didn't you never go out to any of these places, since you're so keen."

" Oh, I would have loved to, Jack. It would have been lovely. But I never had the chance to go."

" You could have made your chance all right if you'd wanted to. You wouldn't half have done yourself a bit of good with any luck. I could take you to a place where any girl with her head screwed on the right way can make £50 as easy as falling off a log. Not now, of course, old girl. You're a bit long in the tooth. Fair and fourteen is what they like."

" Yes, I guess you're right there, Jack. I'm not getting any younger. Ten years on Piccadilly and five down here don't do you any good, do it? I've never had a chance you know. It was a sailor that started me off. He promised to come back and marry me and he never did. I waited for years for him. Never even sent a picture post card, the cad. It's a hard life for us girls, Jack."

The man withdrew his hand and lit another cigarette. An insect crawled out rashly from under the sheets. Jack caught it neatly and passed sentence of death with finger and thumb. It was hotter than ever in this fifth floor room. Spears of light stabbed through the wounds in the venetian blind. A fly played listlessly about the gas bracket. . .

" And I came from a good home and I had a good bringing up. No girl ever had a better father nor mother. Just one little slip—if only Walter had stuck to me I'd have never been what I am now."

Jack expelled smoke slowly and insolently from his lungs.

" I shouldn't worry yourself about that. You'd have been playing the same tricks if you'd been born a duchess. So cut out that Y.M.C.A. touch. What's the matter with you anyway? Trying to swing me for an extra quid or something?"

" No, of course not, Jack. How could you think such a thing of me. It's just I get so low sometimes when I think—you won't forget me, will you, Jack?"

" I expect so."

" Send me a picture postcard, Jack; one with a foreign view on it, will you, Jack?"

" All right, I'll send you a postcard. I'll send you a view of Sydney Harbour, will that suit?"

" All, Jack, that would be lovely. Are you really going to Sydney?"

" Sure thing. Why not?"

" I've got a necklace that came from Sydney. Just like real pearls. I wore it at a dance once and people kept coming up and asking if they were real. What are you going to do at Sydney, Jack? What sort of cargo are you taking?"

" You don't want to know. Women aren't interested in such things."

" I am, Jack, reelly I am. Do tell me what it is—coal? tobacco? spices!"

" Tobacco! Spices! Where the hell do you think we are? Borneo? Or the West Indies? It's bloomers we're taking, Queenie, pink bloomers with frills on for the black women."

Queenie chuckled. The bed shook slightly. She gave Jack a playful push.

" Go on, Jack. They don't wear such things there."

" Now how do you know? You've never been there."

" Well, how do you know anyway? You're no call to know better than me even if you have been there."

" Oh, I know; I know all right. Trust Jack Burt to know! No, it's just a mixed cargo we've got, Queenie, bits of all sorts of things. . .

. . . . . .

" Jack!"

Absorbed in pulling on his trousers Jack gave a grunt of impatience.

" Jack, dear."

" Well?"

" You won't forget that picture postcard, will you Jack?"

" Christ! You're a girl, aren't you. Sure you don't want me to marry you?"

" Oh, Jack, It's——"

" All right, all right. I'll send you a picture postcard—like the first one I sent me mother, eh? You are a soft cow and no error. Well, here's the last of the dough."

Queenie took the pound note and crumpled it up in her hand. He was going, really going. The week was up. Off to foreign parts, Sydney, foreign girls; and she sitting here, getting old,

alone—Queenie sat on the edge of the bed and felt nice and sad.

" Jack, I've been a good girl to you, haven't I?"

Jack stood back and surveyed her critically, the smoke from his drooping cigarette curling up past his eyes.

" Not so bad, not so bad. I've spent worse weeks—but not much worse. Sorry, old girl, you don't want to take no notice of my chipping. No, I can't manage another quid. That was the last one I had. You've cleaned me out as clean as a whistle. Look, all I've got between me and the workhouse."

Struggling into her chemise Queenie gazed at the broad palm on which lay a shilling, a sixpence, and a few coppers.

" There's enough for a drink for us both, Jack. Stand us one, there's a dear."

" Right oh, you shall have a bitter, me heart's love. Only get those bloody clouts of yours on quick. I shan't be sorry to get on board again, I can tell you. This land fair gives me the gripes."

Guy Taylor

WASTEFUL WOMAN

"SOME coffee and some ink," ordered Euphemia from her usual corner of the Caffé Paskowski. Outside the awning was a blind white day, and it was pleasant to sit one safe step away from the glare. She took up her pen and started her daily letter to England. "There ought to be a new Table of Kindred and Affinity," she began, "a subtle, spiritualised one. People oughtn't to be able to fall in love with their emotional grandfather or son. The Prayerbook Table, they will tell you, is founded on natural repulsions, but in non-physical relationships there is no such repulsion to act as a guide. Spiritual incest is the commonest of vices."

She gnawed the end of her pen; her gaze penetrated like a needle the fierce and sensual face of a neighbouring middle-aged Italian, the father of a family, and came out beyond him; he was, as it were, spitted upon it, and evidently he felt some discomfort, for he took up his paper and ceased to look in her direction. Impatiently she tore the top sheet from her writing-pad, crumpled it into a ball, and began again. "This is a time so delicate, so flowerlike, that I am in terror of profaning it with words." Again she hesitated, scowled, and tore it up. Her eyes raked the piazza, restless with life as an anthill, and she bent her head once more. "Yesterday I went to see him in his rooms. He was wearing a short green Swiss jacket and strange shoes. His rooms are more orderly than any man's I have ever seen. We did not speak at all; we just made love. He is ardent, young, ridiculous." Again she paused. A young man in a broad-brimmed hat was crossing the piazza. With movements of contemptuous grace he threaded his way through the mush-room growth of small round tables before the café, and sat down opposite her under the awning.

"Good-morning, Mario," said Euphemia politely. "I am writing about you to my friends in England."

" I was awake all night," the young man said with anger. " I have written a poem about you. I will read it to you."

Euphemia took up her pen and added a sentence. " Obviously he has just come from hell. His eyes are devil's eyes, and they are even a little red because of the sulphur."

" I will read it to you," repeated Mario firmly. He took a wad of thin paper from his pocket and unfolded it. Euphemia stretched out her hand. " May I? Thanks. I never listen when people read aloud to me. I just sit and let it trickle over me and never hear a word. Oh dear, it's awfully long, isn't it? Why, it's not about me at all, it's about yourself."

She glanced up at the young man's brow of thunder. " I will walk in the piazza," said he, " while you read it."

Left alone, Euphemia yawned. " What an impossible situation. There must be at least thirty verses. *Bella signora d'oltre mare*—that means me, I suppose. Oh Lord, what's this? Deaf to the crickets of life and the crickets of love? I should have thought nightingales would be more appropriate. Stupid, it's grido, not grillo. *Deaf to the call of life and the call of love.* Well, and am I now? Here's Mario coming back. I shall tell him I think his poem rotten."

The young man slid imperceptibly into his place, and glared at her with relentless eyes. " Do you like my poem?"

Euphemia folded it up and laid it on the table before replying, with a frank and joyous glance, " No, Mario. It is a bad poem." She began to sip her coffee, watching him over the rim of the cup as he tore the sheets across twice. " What is so lovely about you, Mario, is the way you make one feel in the middle of a play. I am simply more happy than I can tell you."

The young man lit a cigarette and leant across the table.

" Happy? You? You are stupid. I do not know whether you are not wicked. Listen, I am in love with you. I love you. I love you, do you understand? In three days, in a week, you have destroyed me. I can do nothing. Before you came, I was writing—I was writing well. It is true that that is a bad poem. That is what you have done to me. I can neither sleep nor eat. What am I to do with my love for you?"

Euphemia sighed and her eyes grew distant. Something which to the eye was like a golden cloud and to the ear like an exquisite melody approached her and vanished again.

" I'm afraid, Mario dear, that it's a white elephant."

" A white elephant? What does that mean? You are frivolous, you only laugh. Tell me, are you wicked?"

The gold hairs on her arm caught the sunlight and glinted: Euphemia stroked them pensively with one finger as she answered, " Yes, Mario. I am a harridan. I am venomous and sadistic and full of idle thoughts, and I cannot stop thinking it funny when people fall in love with me."

Laying his broad-brimmed hat on a chair, the young man bowed his head in his hands. " *Accidenti alle donne.* What can I do? What can I do?"

A long silence fell between the couple, broken at last by a cat's glad cry of recognition. It had just seen Euphemia and it walked rapidly among the legs of tables, chairs, and men until it reached Euphemia's lap, where after several minutes of trampling and pawing it curled round on itself, purring like an engine.

" You see?" said Mario. " Your untidy hair, like nobody's —the way the cats cry and come to you—there is no mistake possible—you are a witch. Strega, Strega," he growled. A baby cobra lurked in his smouldering eyes; that flash and glitter was the waving of a forked and evil tongue. She rose. " I will come back to lunch with you, Mario. Your landlady makes the most delicious salads."

They crossed the white-hot piazza arm in arm. " Why do the people look at us so?" demanded the poet. " Are we so strange, so different? Is it dislike they feel, or curiosity?"

" It's envy," said Euphemia. " They imagine that we imagine we are in heaven. They don't know that I am seasoned and sour as vinegar, while you are green like unripe apples. Well, let them keep their fancies."

Mario stared at her. " Sometimes," he said, sighing heavily, " I feel that I do not understand you."

Under the deep-eaved roofs the shade was black and icy, as fierce as the sunlight had been; they turned in at an ancient doorway and mounted the flights of stairs, where cats' excrement lay like slugs and the doors had bell-pulls of yellow wool. Mario's room was long, with wide northern windows that looked upon Giotto's tower and Brunelleschi's dome, the exquisite stone flora of the south: on the flat roof opposite there was a wooden lavatory embowered in green creepers, with *Wil Duce* painted in huge white lettering upon the door. To Euphemia as she hung

alone from the window, while Mario went to order lunch, it seemed that past and present were shaken up together in some monstrous kaleidoscope.

Mario's landlady burst open the door and came in. She approximated to the shape of a barrel with as much accuracy as the human form can compass; her hair seemed to have rusted away; but the character expressed by the fine nose, mocking lips and cunning ironic eyes showed a world of tenderness and malice. She seized Euphemia's hand and led her to the sofa. " We must talk together, signora, is it not so? What a pity I do not speak your language, what a pity. Mario—ah signora, that good young man. He is like a son to me; I love him with all my heart. He is so good, so kind, so clever, so serious. Signora, he loves you—I beg of you, do not make him unhappy. He is so good, so good." And the honest woman's eyes filled with genuine tears.

" Well, but what can I do?" stammered Euphemia, feeling intensely awkward.

Natalina pressed her with fat hands. " Stay, signora, stay. Do not go away. You do not know how he will grieve. He is so young, so good."

Her entreaties were cut short by Mario's entrance, and she served lunch to the two young people, with an occasional remark or gesture so frank that the blushes which Euphemia could not muster were more than atoned for by those which Mario failed to conceal. " You are a fat old woman and you understand nothing," he cried out at last in a fury. " Go away. Go away." Natalina waddled to the door, bursting into a cackle of mocking laughter, and throwing over her shoulder with an enjoyment as spiteful as it was affectionate, " And you, you are young. Do not waste your time."

Euphemia crumbled the remains of her roll with an absent air as they sat over the meal in silence. This simplicity was beyond her reach: she who never knew what she wanted, or at least gained her desires only to find that she had ceased to desire them, was suddenly bewildered by the steady marching upon her of a relationship she had neither desired nor intended. It was as though, absorbed in trivial detail, one should not notice the onset of an earthquake or a tidal wave. And she saw now with fresh exasperation that she lacked the conviction either adroitly to avoid it or to embrace a tempestuous submergence.

" You are so beautiful, so beautiful," Mario was confiding to the flap of hair that concealed her ear.

She frowned. " Nonsense, Mario. I know what I look like. Would you—um—would you think it frightful of me if I went to sleep? I really can't keep awake another minute."

Mario patted up the cushions on the unyielding sofa. " Sleep then, my darling. Sleep. I will stay beside you and write you another poem. Perhaps it will be a better poem than the one I wrote in the night. O Euphemia," he crooned, dropping to his knees beside her, " Euphemia, the poems I could write for you. If you would love me, there is nothing I could not do, nothing, I tell you, nothing at all."

But Euphemia was already asleep. The heat of the summer afternoon was hushing the streets; the airs that drifted in at the window seemed weighted with warmth and silence. Mario took paper and pencil from his pocket, and wrote a few lines. Then he yawned, glanced up at the sleeping girl, altered an epithet, and began to nod. The afternoon passed by on soundless feet.

Suddenly she woke, and looked in a startled way about the room. The untidy table still strewn with lunch, the flask of wine, the slumbering young man, she blinked at unrecognizingly; she rubbed her eyes, and gazed, fascinated, into Mario's unconscious face. The black lashes shadowed the clear skin beneath; the angelic mouth was set in the hint of a smile. But " Oh no, oh no," whispered Euphemia to herself in abrupt conviction. She slid noiselessly from the couch and went to the window. Violet hues were tinging the gold outside, and a finger's breadth distant was the lovely line of the Cathedral dome, frail as a bubble in the cooling day. A wave of sadness broke over her; she could almost have fallen to weeping for the treasure she had been given and did not want. " Deaf to the crickets of life and the crickets of love," she thought with bitter amusement. And heaven, like the dome of divine Brunelleschi, a finger's breadth away.

In her room at the pension, overlooking the sage-green Arno, Euphemia was packing. Suitcases opened their jaws around her like so many crocodiles, while innumerable different aspects of Euphemia lay on the bed and drooped over the chairs, waiting to be swallowed up. In the middle of her labours she went over to the writing-table, and added another paragraph to her letter of the morning.

" Do you know that moment of remorseless clear-sightedness that sometimes comes just as you wake from sleep? You see things baldly, in essential hard outline, the lights and shadows stripped away. *Good God, I thought, the man's a foreigner.*

Don't write to me here again. To-morrow I shall be in Rome."

A. S. J. Tessimond

SUNDAY AT HOME

HAVING perused at ease *The News of the World*
For juicy titbits of the world's ill-doing—
Murder and rape and richer, cryptic sins
(Half-hinted vice, arcane, unnameable)—
He stretches bedroom slippers to the blaze,
Sinks deeper in the green luxuriant plush,
And bids a comfortable stuffiness
Soothe and allay the thought of six days' toil—
The Toiler now the Lord. The morning slides
Insensibly towards the dinner-hour
When sizzling beef, succulent brussels-sprouts,
And crisp potatoes laved in dense brown gravy
Render material aid to Sunday's heaven
(Yet even these inglorious when the suet,
Doyenne and dowager of puddings, comes!) . . .
Next, the ineffable replete siesta,
Sacrosanct doze from 2 till 4 p.m.,
With dreams of angels, strangely like the chorus
Of the Kilburn Empire grand revue last week,
Who bear him up to even happier realms . . .
But waking draws a veil too soon, too soon,
And tea-time. Yet hot muffins have their balm
Even for the wakened sleeper . . . Now a walk
Through darkling streets, past friendly public-houses,
Past where from windows of fried-fish-shops steal
Ribbons of steam that wreathe and thinly curdle,
Wafting their odour to the passing nose.
Then home to supper and the evening pipe:
Wireless (London, Daventry): and then
(Glorious procrastination!) gradually,
Grumblingly, regally, at length to bed.

A. S. J. Tessimond

AUTUMN

ALREADY men are brushing up
Brown leaves around the saddened parks.
At Marble Arch the nights draw in
Upon expounders of Karl Marx.

By the Round Pond the lovers feel
Heavier dews, and grow uneasy.
Elderly men don overcoats,
Catch cold—sniff—become hoarse and wheezy.

Grey clouds streak across chill white skies.
Refuse and dirty papers blow
About the gutters. Shoppers hurry,
Oppressed by vague autumnal woe.

The cats that pick amongst the empty
Goldflake boxes, sniffing orts
From frowsy fish-shops, seem beruffled,
Limp of tail and out of sorts.

Policemen are pale and fin-de-siècle.
The navvy's arm wilts and relaxes.
With more than usual bitterness
Bus-drivers curse impulsive taxis.

A general malaise descends:
Desire for something none can say.
And autumn brings once more the pangs
Of this our annual decay!

A. S. J. Tessimond

THE CONDUCTOR

(*Concert-Study*)

HIS arms are long
tentacles on
the clotted breeze
of " brass "—catarrhal horns,
crackling trombones.
He wafts towards us
(meek rows of waiting faces)
a gust of violins,
a wave that rises, rises
till he too rises on it
and hovers far above us,
than falls like a pricked balloon . . .
But for a moment he is master.
He bends towards the oboi and the oboi whine,
inclines towards the celi and each rich-brown belly speaks
harmonious moans;
to the piccolo, and, obedient, the piccolo squeaks:
he coaxes, wheedles, they answer . . .
When suddenly all the instruments shout at once,
clarinets, trumpets, drums:
tiptoe he strives to quell the clamour
(but triangle and cymbals hammer):
he is overwhelmed; wrestles, again to reel
(hard hails the glockenspiel):
towers once more, once more quails . . . and emerges
triumphant from the music's surges:
stands erect, dripping, while the heavens pause:
then crumples, as we thunder our applause.

Wisdom of the Quarter

ALREADY it is the mode for parties of bright young people, on returning from a ball, to take their last meal at a coffee-stall in the small hours. If this fashion brings them into friendly intercourse with the all-night workers and toilers, so much to the good.

Westminster Gazette.

* * *

WE in these days can live as Christ lived, and we will desire no other kind of life if we remember that the guerdon of such an ideal is that, despite the dragons' teeth, we shall walk through the valley of the shadow of death and yet fear no evil.

REV. E. L. MACASSEY, in *Daily Express.*

* * *

IF ST. PAUL LIVED NOW IN LONDON—— WOULD ATTEND THE CUP FINAL. CHRIST, GREATEST SPORTSMAN.

—REV. J. SHEPHERD.

A TWO-MINUTES silence on Good Friday at the moment when Jesus died on the Cross was urged at Islington Chapel by the pastor, the *Rev. Joseph Shepherd,* last night.

Mr. Shepherd was conducting a special Football Service, and one of his declarations was that *if St. Paul came to London he would attend the Cup Final, and he would preach many sermons from the contest.*

Westminster Gazette.

* * *

MOST girls take a great deal of trouble with their hair, but they often neglect to perfume it. This, I think, is most important, especially with those who dance a lot. Their heads are generally just under their partners' noses, and a delicate suggestion of violets, or any other scent, adds greatly to their charm. All you have to do is to spray a little scent over your hair once a day.

DOROTHY WARD, in *The Star.*

* * *

"THE Proposal," by Anton Tchekhov, would be booed off the stage of a fifth-rate music-hall.

ST. JOHN ERVINE, in *The Observer.*

* * *

IT cannot be expected that countries with standards of public morals very different from those prevailing in Great Britain should be lifted by a League Convention suddenly up to the British level.

The Observer.

HIGHAMISMS'.

"OLD saws resharpened with one or two ones," is how Sir Charles Higham descr "Tittle Tattle," a book of his aphorisms which just been printed privately. Here are a few of efforts :

"There never was an age when it is so to get on, or to get off."

"To err is human—but don't get fined."

"It's never too late to spend."

"People who save for a rainy day ra enjoy the dry ones."

"He who advertises—realises."

"Push your business or get the busi push."

Daily N

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MOUSTACHE SENSATIONS.

THE button-hole habit, as I said the other has acquired favour with the Queen. To- her carnation matched her plum-coloured ve toque, which was partially veiled with lace of same colour.

The King had violets in his button-hole, and L Minto, who with Lord Claud Hamilton was in tendance on their Majesties, had a big Malma carnation on the collar of her sable coat and a gr and brown dress underneath.

Sir Laming Worthington-Evans and Lord Wyf whose moustaches were one of the minor sensati of the day, were also in the Royal Box.

Westminster Gaz

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A SMALL INVALID.

I was very glad to hear this afternoon that l Master "Sandy" Ramsay, Lady Patr Ramsay's little boy, is well on the road to reco after his very severe attack of 'flu.

He has been laid up at Clarence House, but hoped that he will soon be able to leave Londo recuperate at the seaside. Both Commander Lady Patricia Ramsay were laid up with 'flu before they left for Ceylon.

Princess Helena Victoria, who is a unive favourite with the children in the Royal Family, been in constant attendance on little "Sand Ramsay. "Thora" is the pet name by which Princess is known to her relatives, and "Sand and many of her small cousins call her "Auntie

Westminster Gaz

* * *

THINK it a lamentable sign of the times that the provincial theatres are reduced to the necessity resenting the works of the literary eunuchs who o many of the London theatres are pouring their tive passions into plays, and I heartily hope you soon see a return to the simple, natural and lesome drama of the much-derided past.

SIR HALL CAINE.

* * *

E BLOOD.

NOTHER first novel by a woman is announced by John Long. It is " Gossamer Summer," Edith Evans, who claims descent from Edward

writers of the blood royal are rare, her book ld be read with avidity.

er grandmother was a friend of George Eliot, Miss Evans is the proud possessor of the tiny ot in which her tea was brewed.

Sunday Express.

* * *

HE English ideal is honesty. It is figuratively called " cricket," " fairplay," or " sport "; in fact it is a love of the square deal, and a f that happiness, not logic, is (for the greatest ber) the greatest good. Cleverness, adroitness, iance, are outside the general aims of the Eng- Modesty is an English ideal. What friends has praggart in England? What friends the bully?

FRANK SWINNERTON, in *Daily Express.*

* * *

COMMUNITY LAUGHING.

(From our Wireless Correspondent.)

HE B.B.C. is thinking out a community laughter scheme. The idea is that parties of people in ous studios up and down the country shall be e to laugh, and that listeners shall laugh with n—though the possibility that they may laugh at n is not ruled out. The chain of laughter will n in London. After a bout here listeners will be ched over to, say, Manchester, from which more hter will be heard; then to another station, and n. It has not been decided how the laughter is e caused, whether by comic songs, stories, or e fooling.

Manchester Guardian.

* * *

ACE OF SPRING.

HE Daffodil Show at the Royal Horticultural Hall, to which I went yesterday afternoon, a restful change after the crowds and heat of previous evening.

ne of the most striking figures in the hall was y Oxford and Asquith, who seemed to have sed in honour of the occasion.

e wore a yellow coat and a black hat and skirt, carried a thin black cane.

e looked not unlike one of the daffodils them- es as she stood admiring the magnificent rows owers.

Daily Express.

* * *

IF I had a son he would be a genius!

ETHEL MANNIN, in *Daily Express.*

* * *

I HEAR a rumour that one of the most enterprising of our younger novelists is writing a novel of a million words, to be published in seven volumes; and I hope it is true.

J. C. SQUIRE, in *The Observer.*

* * *

AFTER pondering the question: " Who is the greatest Englishman?" I feel bound to answer: " The late General Booth, of the Salvation Army."

J. J. BELL, the Scots author, in the *Daily Express.*

* * *

I ONCE spent a month hoeing beans every day and all day long when they were in flower. There were two of us, and we could talk; we told each other stories about our aunts, and it was like Heaven. Every moment in that month was delicious.

I have often thought that the worst job would be to work a lift, or to be a policeman. But I daresay that policemen are never dull. It is possible to keep happy in strange ways.

DAVID GARNETT, in *Sunday Express.*

* * *

AS the years seem to fly there comes upon me a new and lasting impression that there is nothing quite so wonderful as Nature. It draws me, leads me to the Great Master of the Universe.

SIR HARRY LAUDER, in *Sunday Express.*

* * *

CATHERINE OF RUSSIA made me eat quite different food while I was playing her! In the ordinary way I always have my one solid meal at about one o'clock, and I eat just ordinary things. I never have more than one meal, and from then till the next morning I only have a glass of milk or something light like that. This suits me perfectly when I am playing in " Romance," but when I first played " Catherine of Russia " I found that I needed more food or I felt exhausted, and I had to change my mealtime to 5.30. Also I had often a desire for a beef steak or a big chop—things I never have any fancy for in the ordinary way. I suppose Catherine with her strong dominating character and statesman's brain, took it out of me much more than beautiful Cavallini, with her exquisite tenderness of heart overflowing with love.

* * *

BEAUTY AND HEART APPEAL.

IN " Romance " one has that rare mixture of a play full of beautiful thoughts and an appeal to the heart strong enough to make it a great popular success. There is extraordinary beauty in the character of Cavallini, and the playing of it always makes me feel exaltée.

DORIS KEANE, in *The Star.*

* * *

ONE MORE COMPLIMENT.

SIR,—A great-aunt of mine used to hold that the most striking compliment paid to her in her youth was that of a young Frenchman who, on taking his leave, bent over her hand and murmured, "Ah, madame, your hand is as soft as pussy's belly."—Yours faithfully,

O. H. T. D., in *The Observer*.

* * *

WHEN I was working in San Francisco about four years ago I learned what I think is the best young man's motto I have ever heard: "Live every day so that at the end of it you can tell anyone to go to blazes."

The young man who wants "comfort" couldn't carry that out. He might be sent there himself instead, and that wouldn't be very comfortable, though it wouldn't really matter very much.

H. GORDON SELFRIDGE, JUN., in *The Weekly Dispatch*.

* * *

SIR W. JOYNSON-HICKS.

SIR WILLIAM JOYNSON-HICKS, the Home Secretary, who is a leading member of the Evangelical party in the Church, said to a *Daily Express* representative last night:

"I think I had better abstain from any observation until I have thoroughly studied the new Prayer-book.

"The burial service, the legalising of vestments, and, above all, the legalising of reservation, are of such importance that I do not wish to express an opinion on them until I have thoroughly studied the questions."

* * *

EVERY woman should read poetry every day! Not, of course, necessarily a great deal of poetry.

Poetry is the easiest of all beauty within reach. You can get the older poets in any free public library—Keats, Swinburne, Tennyson, Longfellow, for instance—or you can buy them in 2*s*. editions.

EVELYN LAYE, in *The Westminster Gazette*.

* * *

ALL babies are beautiful because of their innocent eyes, clear skins, and adorable little necks, where the downy fluff of hair grows.

LADY MARTIN HARVEY, in *The Star*.

* * *

I AM a prey to melancholy because I brood over my health and worry over my ailments. I am always looking at my tongue and trying new diets.

JAMES DOUGLAS, in *The Daily Express*.

* * *

LARGEST CIGAR IN THE WORLD.
19-INCH SMOKE FOR LORD BIRKENHEAD.

LORD BIRKENHEAD'S cigars grow longer and longer. A giant smoke, 19in. long, believed to be the largest in the world, has been provided for him to smoke at the banquet at the Piccadilly Ho London, on Monday, in connexion with Tobacco Trade Exhibition and Congress Olympia.

This exceeds by 12 inches the length of specially-made cigar which Lord Birkenhead took hour to smoke at a recent luncheon.

Westminster Gaze

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AND corsets can be such pretty things! I gen ally have a little edging of tiny rosebuds rou the top of my pink satin ones, and a longish frill lace at the end.

BINNIE HALE, in *The St*

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THE King and Queen spent some hours at British Industries Fair at the White City day, seeing almost every stand and making a nu ber of purchases.

A fine display of pipes by Messrs. Lewis a Hardcastle attracted the King, and, noticing a gi briar, he asked its measurements. It was 24 incl long, weighed ¾lb., and held an ounce of tobacco

"That the sort of thing for Baldwin," he sa laughing. *The St*

* * *

NOTHING distinguished the Prince's journey Madrid from an ordinary excursion on Southern Express.

The Prince ate an original breakfast on the tra He ordered coffee, toast, and butter, and from fruit basket took a banana, which he peeled, cove with marmalade, and ate with evident enjoymen *Daily Expre*

* * *

ARTISTS should take advantage of every fo of advertisement available that is good for and by good form I mean the more artistic ways being brought into prominence, such as havi beautiful photographs in the papers and magazin I do not even except photos in connection with best of face creams and soaps, nor photos tak wearing charming hats and elegant silk stocking

EDNA BEST, in *The St*

* * *

"BY the melody of a great hymn, not less than its words, the souls of the worshippers a fired until the House of the Lord is filled with H Glory."

MR. LLOYD GEORGE, in *The Westminster Gaze*

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"SCOTTIE" IS PLEASED.

"THANKS for 'Templegate's' 10 winners in t days," writes "Scottie," of Bethnal Gre "Carry on for your readers!"

Yesterday "Templegate" gave a winner at 9 to *Daily Hera*

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BUDDHISM is a religion of despair. Christianity is the one thing that is wanted by the orld to-day, and it is making wonderful progress all parts of the earth. It is the one successful ng in the world to-day."

BISHOP OF LONDON, in
The Sunday Express.

* * *

THE well-known Tiller dancing girls in Paris are a source of national pride to the British ony. Their severely simple mode of life comands constant admiration from the Press and blic. Letters from strangers continue to be adssed to them at the music-halls at which they form, but among the girls in the Tiller troupes Paris it is now the custom to hand them unened to their "chaperon."

Daily News.

* * *

HORSEMANSHIP (not the rocking-horsemanship) is the keenest of sports among the sportg occupants of the nurseries of Mayfair and lgravia, and this season finds many well-known bies riding manfully around the riding-master's hool or in the Row, taking their first lessons in ling.

Among the bravest of these is the four-year-old rl of Uxbridge, the twin son of the Marquis and archioness of Anglesey, who is learning to ride, s first efforts being made on the back of a small ny.

The Earl is a very important young man, for he d the King and Queen as sponsors at his christen-g, and he is also a grandson of Violet Duchess of tland. His twin sister, Lady Katherine Paget, d Lady Rose are also being taught the fundaentals of riding, but as yet they are not permitted ride in the Row.

To-day the Earl of Uxbridge's cousins, Miss Peggy d Master Henry Paget, were enjoying a gallop th their grandmother, Lady Alexander Paget. ey are the children of Lady Drogheda, by her first arriage with Lord Victor Paget. *The Star.*

* * *

THE KING AND QUEEN certainly got a delightfully warm welcome, both outside and inside e Victoria Palace last night.

The King never loses any time in settling down these occasions. He saw the Queen had the rner seat commanding the best view, and as soon the National Anthem finished, out he brought om his breast pocket a cigar case, and selected hat looked like a double Corona.

Off came the band, out came a gold match-box, d the King (who did not take off his white gloves) as soon leaning back puffing the cigar with someing of the enthusiasm King Edward used to show, d laughing at the jokes and applauding the zeal d the cleverness of the performers.

The Star.

* * *

MUNROE'S orchestra is now at the Florida, and so is a brilliant apache dancer, Constance Evans.—Last night a Dalmatian puppy was raffled for, a Mrs. Frisby winning it. *The Star.*

* * *

"PEOPLE often ask me how it is possible to write so regularly. I think it is just habit and that in time one can command inspiration. Of course I fail sometimes, but inspiration usually comes in the end. I just sit and wait and eat chocolate. I never smoke."

MADAME KALLAS, in *The Westminster Gazette.*

* * *

MR. RAMSAY MACDONALD showed Mr. Baldwin round the South Kensington Museum on Friday. The Prime Minister gladly availed himself of the services of Mr. MacDonald, who knows the Museum like a book.

For the last week or so the two have been sniping each other at long range from the platform.

This is the sort of thing that makes Continental people—especially Continental politicians—despair of our sanity and sincerity. Yet it is what makes our public life worth living. *The Star.*

* * *

STRUNG UP STRAPS.

THERE is just one little dress tip of mine you may find useful. It is this. On all my vests, cami-knickers and petticoats, or any garment which requires shoulder-straps, I have two eyelet holes, buttonholed, on the front, and one on the back. One end of ribbon is run through a front hole, over the shoulder; through the back hole, back over the shoulder; and through the second front hole, then the two ends are tied in a little bow.

EVELYN LAYE, in *The Star.*

* * *

LOVING A VAIN THING.

BY LOUIS GOLDING.

I shall go even
To the end of my days
  Loving a vain thing.
I shall not weep therefore,
Nor sigh so deep therefore,
  But sing, lo! I shall sing.

My love will not hearken,
Nor is so fashioned
  As to incline an ear.
I shall not suspend, Oh no,
Nor make an end, Oh no,
  Of saying, my Love, my Dear.

But I shall variously
Proclaim my testament
  That Love is to be loved much,
And ease my loads of love
By praising the modes of love,
  Sound, Aspect, Odour, Touch.

If contumaciously,
Scornful of loving,
My love's heart remain stone—
I shall seek, in despite of love,
Even at the height of love,
To petrify my own.

Weekly Dispatch.

* * *

MR. CHURCHILL has a special right to speak of the war: alone among the leading politicians of his day he went and fought in it himself.

No promotion came his way, so presently the country lost a born soldier and regained a Cabinet Minister. *Weekly Dispatch.*

* * *

MR. CHURCHILL'S BOOK.

THE style matches the theme. In its rapidity of movement, its persistent logic, its endless variation of the same general theme with copious illustration and vivid detail, it is more like Macaulay than anyone who has ever written since him; and sometimes, if rarely, the effect on the mind is not unlike that produced by the ghostly tramp of Gibbon's periods.

HERBERT SIDEBOTHAM, in *The Sunday Times.*

* * *

AN INFANT PRODIGY.

I HAD a letter from Miss Ursula Bloom to-day, whose last book, "Candleshades," came out last week. She is at Harlow in Essex with her little son "Pip," who mightily enjoys the country.

Pip, who is nine years old, is something of an infant prodigy. He has already shown that he inherits his mother's talent for writing. He is a firm believer in fairies, and writes delightful little stories. He is entirely independent in thought and act.

His mother taught him all his early lessons herself, but he goes to prep. school in Stevenage very shortly, and is very solicitous that his mother may may be fretting over parting with him. She will indeed miss him greatly.

Westminster Gazette.

* * *

WHEN I was very young, and things went wrong, I got a cup of senna tea, very grateful and comforting, or a whipping which induced tears and relaxed my nerves. If I had only been born to-day, I should have had a Complex instead.

STORM JAMESON, in *The Evening Standard.*

* * *

REPORT ON COMPETITION L.
ADJECTIVES FOR MR. BALDWIN.

THE half-dozen epithets most in favour are:—

1. Honest.
2. Sympathetic.
3. Patriotic.
4. Sincere.
5. Patient.
6. Honourable.

The Observer.

CALL one evening at a friend's house, where y are likely to meet a number of people y know. Get ready a little army of cheerful, genero thoughts. Think what you would do for all tho friends if you came into a fortune, or concentrate the best points of the people you are going to se Then walk into the room in an ordinary way, b continue your "thoughts" in the intervals of tal ing. In a very short time you will feel a pleasan friendly warmth around you as if everyone we particularly pleased to see you. It is your unspok thoughts that have done that little trick. Th have radiated a pleasant, friendly atmosphere round that is caught up very quickly by most peop If you try it and you don't succeed, then you m be sure that there is a stronger character sendi out waves of unkindly thoughts.

G. F. M., in *The Sta*

* * *

THE resourceful hostess at a Northamptonshi house party assembled last week for a meet the Pytchley, which was prevented by the fog a frost, amused her guests by making one and all jo in the "crocodile Charleston," a new variant of t once popular "Paul Jones," in which the dance play "follow my leader" all over the house. the crocodile Charleston the longer the line and t more intricate the twists and turns the better, eve participant being bound to Charleston all the time up stairs, down stairs, and all over the house some popular tune which is sung or whistled loudly as possible by the entire crocodile!

* * *

GEORGE, the large alligator, has been mis having again. Some time ago he d graced himself by quarrelling with a relative w shared his pond, and now he has attacked a croc dile who also has the misfortune to share his hom The first fight was a great success for George becau it ended his adversary's career, but although t crocodile was less unfortunate, he did receive a b on the head which bled for three days. On bo occasions George became aggressive because companions refused to stay in one corner of t pond. MEN AND INTEREST in

The Sunday Tim

* * *

WHITE ELEPHANT.

MY Cannes correspondent tells me that Mi Hector Sassoon's pet cheetah, to which I ferred a few days ago, has turned out to be a wh elephant.

The animal refused to be broken to the hou and was taken back to the vendor, who agreed re-sell only on a commission basis. In the mea while he is retaining the purchase money and cha ing for the beast's keep. *Daily Expre*

* * *

POE had not really a very literary mind. Y cannot imagine Shakespeare bothering his he with cryptograms and cyphers, with all life roari

nd him, waiting to be interpreted, crying out for nderful words with which to be expressed.

J. B. Priestley, in *The Daily News.*

* * *

BELIEVE I write a little better than I used to do, and my bridge has recently improved.

J. B. Priestley, in *The Saturday Review.*

* * *

ENE STRATTON-PORTER'S LAST NOVEL AND HER SWEETEST—

—a novel like FRECKLES by Gene Stratton-Porter, world's most popular author.

—filled to the brim with the scent and colour of flowers and love of the out-of-doors.

—one of the most beautiful books of the year—lavishly decorated—printed throughout in two colours.

Mrs. Porter's last book, THE KEEPER OF THE BEES, sold 200,000 copies in the expensive edition—and was the " best-seller " of 1925.

IE MAGIC GARDEN.

* * *

DUMMY HOAXES THE QUEEN.
" BABY " IN SPECIMEN COT.

DUMMY baby that hoaxed the Queen yesterday is the unknown hero of the Mothercraft aining Centre, Cromwell House, Highgate.

The Queen, moving unsuspectingly from cot to cot, ned full of admiration over one cot—then, a peal laughter, the hoax was unmasked. The pretty upant was but a dummy baby tucked under the clothes of a specimen cot.

Sunday Express.

* * *

'HAT impression of the real Gladstone is strong with me still; in everything he did and said l even looked, he still appears to me the man inly absorbed in his faith.

* * *

TY AT His Core.

'HE picture, however, with which I would like to wind up is that of him walking every morn-, as long as he had the strength, to the morning yers in the church near his home. Piety was at very core of his being; the real heritage he left his people was that man should pass through his thly pilgrimage in the ever-present consciousness walking under the eye of his Maker.

T. P. O'Connor, in *The Star.*

* * *

E Cecil—

LUNCHED with a Yorkshireman at the Hotel Cecil yesterday. He introduced me to M. mpeau, the chef, and Campeau gave us an entre-e bordelaise four inches thick with a flavour that Leeds friend said would remain with him till ie. This bit of Scotch steak had come from ithfield and had been hung for a fortnight.

The Star.

* * *

IT was learned to-day that in Leicester yesterday the Prince of Wales, during the tour of the Wolsey works, stopped at a vat of boiling dye, from which no steam could be seen arising because of the direction of the wind.

" If I put my hand in that will it come out blue," he asked the dyer.

" Don't do that, sir," exclaimed the agitated worker, as the Prince's finger approached the vat, " it will drop off."

The Star.

* * *

Wisdom of the Quarter.

THE Sitwells are loyal fighters on the losing side in a world where beauty has been driven back from the highways and the market-places into the depths of the still hungry spirit.

R. L. Megroz in *The Three Sitwells.*

* * *

MR. MEGROZ is an excellent critic.

T. L. S. on *The Three Sitwells.*

* * *

" DEGRADED DRESS."
BISHOP DENOUNCES THE SHORT SKIRT.

THE Roman Catholic Bishop of Ardagh (Rt. Rev. Joseph Hoare) *denounces women's dress in his Lenten Pastoral.* He states :—

" Lent is the time for inquiring into abuses and correcting them. The first among these is the abominable dress of woman. *Satan made no mistake here in subjecting the fairest of our creation to ridicule, contempt, sin, and perdition.*

" Oh, it brings a blush to the cheek to find grave mothers and pious daughters a cause of scandal.

" Woman never degraded herself as in this costume. Instead of giving us beauty they lower woman below the lowest of the human family, and even suggest the loss of all regard for holy purity.

" We cannot have a clean and noble race till woman is restored to her former dignity, and till then let her not approach the Holy of Holies."

Sunday Express.

* * *

"I THINK English women are the most intellectual in the world."

Carl Brisson, in *The Star.*

* * *

THE British is a democratic government.

Horace Thorogood, in *The Star.*

* * *

Daily Power.

SIR,—Life without love is like bread without butter.

A. W., in *The Daily Express.*

* * *

Vicar Bans the Charleston.

THE Vicar of Nuneaton, the Rev. J. L. White, has arranged a parish church dance, and has banned the Charleston, on the ground that " they would get all the riff raff of the cheap halls of the town." The inference from this statement has

caused a storm among local dancers, who contend that the Charleston is a perfectly legitimate dance which is popular with all classes of people.

The Vicar, who introduced church soirees in Nuneaton, has stated that at the last soiree a woman member of another church was present when dancing was in progress, and remarked that she was glad she did not attend the parish church. "We get along all right, however," added the Vicar, "although we have a smoking parson and a dancing curate." *The Star.*

* * *

MRS. PATRICK MACGILL.

I SPENT a couple of delightful hours with Mr. and Mrs. Patrick MacGill out at their Hendon home, and Mrs. MacGill told me something of the difficulties with which she has had to contend while writing her new serial "The Ukelele Girl," which begins in *The Star* to-night.

When the baby (called Sheila after their great friend Shelia Kaye-Smith) was born six months ago she had completed only the first instalment. "Usually I can finish a story in three or four months," she said. "It's different with my husband. He's lazy! He writes as the mood takes him, to-day perhaps a bit of a first chapter; to-morrow a bit of the twentieth, and he spends hours polishing and repolishing a single phrase. I write the story straight off from start to finish and rarely have to make serious alteration.

"'The Ukelele Girl' has taken much longer to do because I've had to write it at odd moments, often—indeed mostly—at night. One can let servants manage the house while one is writing a story; but one can't hand over the baby to them. At any rate, I can't!" *The Star.*

* * *

OUR NEW SERIAL STORY.

THE UKELELE GIRL,

By MRS. PATRICK MACGILL,

Author of "Her Undying Past," "Her Dancing Partner, etc.

SYNOPSIS.

GERDA KAYE, a beautiful young girl of twenty, was left alone in the world, to bring up and protect her sister GILLIAN'S baby. Gillian, so like Gerda the two could scarcely be told apart, had secretly married a handsome rogue named RAMOND CARROLL while in Germany. She discovered him to be the head of a gang of international criminals. Gillian died, and, as the house and all it contained was sold over her head by their heartless stepfather, MARK THAINE, the nurse, AGNES LONGFIELD, a sweet, capable girl, took Gerda and the baby to her own lodgings in London.

After much vain searching, Gerda obtained a
as companion-secretary to MRS. TOCHE, thro
a quaint agency run by two girls calling th
selves Everybody's Mothers.

MARTIN SELWYN was invited to a dance
cabaret show given by Mrs. Toche. He was
a famous novelist, brought into prominence by
wonderful war stories and novels. Although
poor origin, he was now the unwilling darlin
society.

HELEN LISTER was also there. She had been
sionately in love with Martin for years, but
was quite indifferent. At this dance Gerda m
a tremendous hit as a dragon fly, with a uke
Helen was filled with jealous fear when
noticed how Martin was engrossed with Ger
beauty and charm. *The S*

* * *

THE artist can no more go on writing the s
story over and over again, or painting the s
picture, than Euclid could stop at the forty-
proposition of Book I, and go on proving it fore
because it was a winner.

DAVID GARNETT, in *The Weekly Dispa*

* * *

PRINCESS ELIZABETH, who has spent m
time in the Queen's company of late,
developed remarkably during her parents' abse
She has been taught to say "Mamma"
"Dadda?" as a surprise to the Duke and Duch
She cannot yet walk, but crawls with remark
speed and astounding agility all over her nurs
and hails every member of the Royal family
loud whoops and gurgles of delight.

Sunday Exp

* * *

THE DISORGANISER.

DURING the last two weeks I have mentioned
Hon. Mrs. Reginald Fellowes. I cannot
mentioning her again.

M. Bernstein said to me: "Do you know
Mrs. Fellowes comes to London in May?" a
replied, "No."

"She comes to London in May," he said,
order to disorganise London in June."

She is now operating for July. *Sunday Exp*

* * *

"BLOSSOM."

MRS. FREEMAN-THOMAS, who is know
her friends as "Blossom," bears a st
resemblance to her aunt. She has black hair, a
white skin, beautiful features and figure.

Her conversation is bright and always to the p
Daily Exp

Recent Books by Contributors to *The New Coterie*

H. E. Bates	"The Two Sisters." A Novel with an introduction by Edward Garnett. Cape, 1926	7/6
Nancy Cunard	"Parallax" Poems. Hogarth Press	3/6
" "	"Sublunary" Poems. Hodder & Stoughton ..	6/–
" "	"Outlaws" Poems. Elkin Mathews	5/–
Rhys Davies	"The Song of Songs" Archer	3/6 & 10/6
Aldous Huxley	"Those Barren Leaves" Chatto & Windus ..	7/6
" "	"Antic Hay" " " ..	7/6
" "	"Crome Yellow" " " ..	7/6
" "	"Two or Three Graces" " " ..	7/6
" "	"Little Mexican" " " ..	7/6
" "	"Mortal Coils" " " ..	6/–
" "	"Along the Road" " " ..	7/6
" "	"Limbo" " " ..	5/–
" "	"On the Margin" " " ..	6/–
" "	"Leda & other Poems" " " ..	5/–
" "	"The Discovery" " " ..	5/–
" "	"Jesting Pilate" " " ..	16/–
" "	"Selected Poems Blackwell	5/–
T. F. Powys	"The Left Leg" Chatto & Windus	7/6
" "	"Black Bryony" " "	6/–
" "	"Mark Only" " "	7/–
" "	"Mr. Tasker's Gods" " "	7/6
" "	"Mockery Gap" " "	7/–
" "	"Innocent Birds" " "	7/6
" "	"Mr. Weston's Good Wine" To be published in a limited edition of 500 copies only by Chatto & Windus	*Price not fixed yet*
" "	"What Lack I Yet?" Limited to 100 copies signed. Archer	10/6
" "	"A Strong Girl" and "The Bride" Limited to 100 copies signed. Archer	10/6
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" "	"Feed my Swine" Limited to 100 copies signed. Archer	10/6
Paul Selver	"Personalities" Poems. Allen & Unwin ..	2/6
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" "	"One, Two, Three" A Novel. Jarrolds 1926	7/6

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